THE COMPLETE POETICAL WORKS OF JOANNA BAILLIE.

FIRST AMERICAN EDITION

ONE VOLUME.

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NOTE TO THE AMERICAN EDITION.

This is the only edition of Miss Baillie's works, which contains *all* her poetical writings. The Author herself has been consulted, through the kindness of a Friend,—and considerable pains have been taken to render this compilation uniform and complete. It includes the following articles not found in any previous collection of her poems:—'The Martyr, A Drama,'—'The Bride, A Drama,'—'A November Night's Traveller,'—'Sir Maurice, A Ballad,'—'Address to a Steam Vessel,'—'To Mrs. Siddons,'—'A Volunteer Song,'—'To a child.'—An alteration of the tragedy of 'Rayner,' now first published from the manuscript of the Author, is likewise contained in this volume.

The Publishers are gratified, in being thus enabled to furnish a full collection of the various poetical writings, of an Author, so long known by her brilliant talents, and so highly esteemed for her moral purity and domestic worth.

The utmost care has been taken to follow the Author's orthography, throughout this volume.

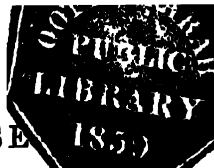
"——the notes that rung
From the wild harp, which silent hung
By silver Avon's holy shore,
Till twice an hundred years rolled o'er;
When she, the bold enchantress, came,
With fearless hand, and heart on flame!
From the pale willow snatched the treasure,
And swept it with a kindred measure,
Till Avon's swans, while rung the grove
With Monfort's hate and Basil's love,
Awakening at the inspired strain,
Deemed their own Shakspeare lived again."

Sir Walter Scott.

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INTRODUCTORY DISCOURSE.

It is natural for a writer, who is about to submit his works to the Public, to feel a strong inclination, by some Preliminary Address, to conciliate the favor of his reader, and dispose him, if possible, to peruse them with a favorable eye. I am well aware, however, that his endeavors are generally fruitless: in his situation our hearts revolt from all appearance of confidence, and we consider his diffidence as hypocrisy. Our own word is frequently taken for what we say of ourselves, but very rarely for what we say of our works. Were the three plays which this small volume contains, detached pieces only, and unconnected with others that do not yet appear, I should have suppressed this inclination altogether; and have allowed my reader to begin what is, before him and to form what opinion of it his taste or his humor might direct, without any previous trespass upon his time or his patience. But they are part of an extensive design: of one which, as far as my information goes, has nothing exactly similar to it in any language: of one which a whole life's time will be limited enough to accomplish; and which has, therefore, a considerable chance of being cut short by that hand which nothing can resist.

Before I explain the plan of this work, I must make a demand upon the patience of my reader, whilst I endeavour to communicate to him those ideas regarding human nature, as they in some degree affect almost every species of moral writings, but particularly the Dramatic, that induced me to attempt it; and, as far as my judgment enabled me to apply them, has directed me in the execution of it.

From that strong sympathy which most creatures, but the human above all, feel for others of their kind, nothing has become so much an object of man's curiosity as man himself. We are all conscious of this within ourselves, and so constantly do we meet with it in others, that, like every circumstance of continually repeated occurrence, it thereby escapes observation. Every person who is not deficient in intellect, is more or less occupied in tracing amongst the individuals he converses with, the varieties of understanding and temper which constitute the characters of men; and receives great pleasure from every stroke of nature that points out to him those varieties. This is, much more than we are aware of, the occupation of children, and of grown people also, whose penetration is but lightly esteemed; and that conversation which degenerates with them into trivial and mischievous tattling, takes its rise not unfrequently from the same source that supplies the rich vein of the satirist and the wit. That eagerness so universally shown for the conversation of the latter, plainly enough indicates how many people have been occupied in the same way with themselves. Let any one, in a large company, do or say what is strongly expressive of his peculiar character, or of some passion or humor of the moment, and it will be detected by almost every person present. How often may we see a very stupid countenance animated with a smile, when the learned and the wise have betrayed some native feature of their own minds! and how often will this be the case when they have supposed it to be concealed under a very sufficient disguise! From this constant employment of their minds, most people, I believe, without being conscious of it, have stored up in idea the greater part of those strong marked varieties of human character, which may be said to divide it into classes; and in one of those classes they involuntarily place every new person they become acquainted with.

I will readily allow that the dress and the manners of men, rather than their characters and dispositions, are the subjects of our common conversation, and seem chiefly to occupy the multitude. But let it be remembered that it is much easier to express our observations upon these. It is easier to communicate to another how a man wears his wig and cane, what kind of house he inhabits, and what kind of table he keeps, than from what slight traits in his words and actions we have been led to conceive certain impressions of his character: traits that will often escape the memory, when the opinions that were founded upon them remain. Besides, in communicating our ideas of the characters of others, we are often called upon to support them with more expence of reasoning than we can well afford; but our observations on the dress and appearance of men seldom involve us in such difficulties. For these, and other reasons too tedious to mention, the generality of people appear to us more trifling than they are: and I may venture to say, that, but for this sympathetic curiosity towards others of our kind which is so strongly implanted within us, the attention we pay to the dress and manners of men would dwindle into an employment as insipid, as examining the varieties of plants and minerals, is to one who understands not natural history.

In our ordinary intercourse with society, this sympathetic propensity of our minds is exercised upon men under the common oc-

currences of life, in which we have often observed them. Here, vanity and weakness put themselves forward to view, more conspicuously than the virtues; here, men encounter those smaller trials, from which they are not apt to come off victorious; and here, consequently, that which is marked with the whimsical and ludicrous will strike us most forcibly, and make the strongest impression on our memory. To this sympathetic propensity of our minds, so exercised, the genuine and pure comic of every composition, whether drama, fable, story, or satire, is addressed.

If man is an object of so much attention to man, engaged in the ordinary occurrences of life, how much more does he excite his curiosity and interest when placed in extraordinary situations of difficulty and distress? It cannot be any pleasure we receive from the sufferings of a fellow-creature which attracts such multitudes of people to a public execution, though it is the horror we conceive for such a spectacle that keeps so many more away. To see a human being bearing himself up under such circumstances, or struggling with the terrible apprehensions which such a situation impresses, must be the powerful incentive, that makes us press forward to behold what we shrink from, and wait with trembling expectation for what we dread.* For though few at such a spectacle can get near enough to distinguish the expression of face, or the minuter parts of a criminal's behaviour, yet from a considerable distance will they eagerly mark whether he steps firmly; whether the motions of his body denote agitation or calmness; and if the wind does but ruffle his garment, they will, even from that change upon the outline of his distant figure, read some expression connected with his dreadful situation. Though there is a greater proportion of people in whom this strong curiosity will be overcome by other dispositions and motives; though there are many more who will stay away from such a sight than will go to it; yet there are very few who will not be eager to converse with a person who has beheld it; and to learn, very minutely, every circumstance connected with it, except the very act itself of inflicting death. To lift up the roof of his dungeon, like the *Diable Boiteux*, and look upon a criminal the night before he suffers, in his still hours of privacy, when all that disguise is removed which is imposed by respect for the opinion of others, the strong motive by which even the lowest and wickedest of men still continue to be actuated, would present an object to the mind of every person, not withheld from it by great timidity of character, more powerfully attractive than almost any other.

Revenge, no doubt, first began amongst the savages of America that dreadful custom of sacrificing their prisoners of war. But the perpetration of such hideous cruelty could never have become a permanent national custom, but for this universal desire in the human mind to behold man in every situation, putting forth his strength against the current of adversity, scorning all bodily anguish, or struggling with those feelings of nature, which, like a beating stream, will oft times burst through the artificial barriers of pride. Before they begin those terrible rites they treat their prisoners kindly; and it cannot be supposed that men, alternately enemies and friends to so many neighboring tribes, in manners and appearance like themselves, should so strongly be actuated by a spirit of public revenge. This custom, therefore, must be considered as a grand and terrible game, which every tribe plays against another; where they try not the strength of the arm, the swiftness of the feet, nor the acuteness of the eye, but the fortitude of the soul. Considered in this light, the excess of cruelty exercised upon their miserable victim, in which every hand is described as ready to inflict its portion of pain, and every head ingenious in the contrivance of it, is no longer to be wondered at. To put into his measure of misery one agony less, would be, in some degree, betraying the honor of their nation, would be doing a species of injustice to every hero of their own tribe who had already sustained it, and to those who might be called upon to do so; amongst whom each of these savage tormentors has his chance of being one, and has prepared himself for it from his childhood. Nay, it would be a species of injustice to the haughty victim himself, who would scorn to purchase his place amongst the heroes of his nation, at an easier price than his undaunted predecessors.

Amongst the many trials to which the human mind is subjected, that of holding intercourse, real or imaginary, with the world of spirits; of finding itself alone with a being terrific and awful, whose nature and power are unknown, has been justly considered as one of the most severe. The workings of nature in this situation, we all know, have ever been the object of our most eager inquiry. No man wishes to see the Ghost himself, which would certainly procure him the best information on the subject, but every man wishes to see one who believes that he sees it, in all the agitation and wildness of that species of terror. To gratify this curiosity how many people have dressed up hideous apparitions to frighten the timid and superstitious! and have done it at the risk of destroying their happiness or understanding for ever. For the instances of intellect being

* In confirmation of this opinion I may venture to say, that of the great numbers who go to see a public execution, there are but very few who would not run away from, and avoid it, if they happened to meet with it unexpectedly. We find people stopping to look at a procession, or any other uncommon sight, they may have fallen in with accidentally, but almost never an execution. No one goes there who has not made up his mind for the occasion; which would not be the case, if any natural love of cruelty were the cause of such assemblies.

destroyed by this kind of trial are more numerous, perhaps, in proportion to the few who have undergone it, than by any other.

How sensible are we of this strong propensity within us, when we behold any person under the pressure of great and uncommon calamity! Delicacy and respect for the afflicted will, indeed, make us turn ourselves aside from observing him, and cast down our eyes in his presence; but the first glance we direct to him will involuntarily be one of the keenest observation, how hastily soever it may be checked; and often will a returning look af inquiry mix itself by stealth with our sympathy and reserve.

But it is not in situations of difficulty and distress alone, that man becomes the object of this sympathetic curiosity: he is no less so when the evil he contends with arises in his own breast, and no outward circumstance connected with him either awakens our attention or our pity. What human creature is there, who can behold a being like himself under the violent agitation of those passions which all have, in some degree, experienced, without feeling himself most powerfully excited by the sight? I say, all have experienced: for the bravest man on earth knows what fear is as well as the coward; and will not refuse to be interested for one under the dominion of this passion, provided there be nothing in the circumstances attending it to create contempt. Anger is a passion that attracts less sympathy than any other, yet the unpleasing and distorted features of an angry man will be more eagerly gazed upon, by those who are no wise concerned with his fury or the objects of it, than the most amiable placid countenance in the world. Every eye is directed to him; every voice hushed to silence in his presence: even children will leave off their gambols as he passes, and gaze after him more eagerly than the gaudiest equipage. The wild tossings of despair: the gnashing of hatred and revenge; the yearnings of affection, and the softened mien of love; all the language of the agitated soul, which every age and nation understand, is never addressed to the dull or inattentive.

It is not merely under the violent agitations of passion, that man so rouses and interests us; even the smallest indications of an unquiet mind, the restless eye, the muttering lip, the half-checked exclamation, and the hasty start, will set our attention as anxiously upon the watch, as the first distant flashes of a gathering storm. When some great explosion of passion bursts forth, and some consequent catastrophe happens, if we are at all acquainted with the unhappy perpetrator, how minutely shall we endeavour to remember every circumstance of his past behaviour! and with what avidity shall we seize upon every recollected word or gesture, that is in the smallest degree indicative of the supposed state of his mind, at the time when they took place. If we are not acquainted with him, how eagerly shall we listen to similar recollections from another! Let us understand, from observation or report, that any person harbours in his breast, concealed from the world's eye, some powerful rankling passion of what kind soever it may be, we shall observe every word, every motion, every look, even the distant gait of such a man, with a constancy and attention bestowed upon no other. Nay, should we meet him unexpectedly on our way, a feeling will pass across our minds as though we found ourselves in the neighborhood of some secret and fearful thing. If invisible, would we not follow him into his lonely haunts, into his closet, into the midnight silence of his chamber? There is, perhaps, no employment which the human mind will with so much avidity pursue, as the discovery of concealed passion, as the tracing the varieties and progress of a perturbed soul.

It is to this sympathetic curiosity of our nature, exercised upon mankind in great and trying occasions, and under the influence of the stronger passions, when the grand, the generous, and the terrible attract our attention far more than the base and depraved, that the high and powerfully tragic, of every composition, is addressed.

This propensity is universal. Children begin to show it very early; it enters into many of their amusements, and that part of them too, for which they show the keenest relish. It oftentimes tempts them, as well as the mature in years, to be guilty of tricks, vexations and cruelty; yet God Almighty has implanted it within us, as well as all our other propensities and passions, for wise and good purposes. It is our best and most powerful instructor. From it we are taught the proprieties and decencies of ordinary life, and are prepared for distressing and difficult situations. In examining others we know ourselves. With limbs untorn, with head unsmitten, with senses unimpaired by despair, we know what we ourselves might have been on the rack, on the scaffold, and in the most afflicting circumstances of distress. Unless when accompanied with passions of the dark and malevolent kind, we cannot well exercise this disposition without becoming more just, more merciful, more compassionate; and as the dark and malevolent passions are not the predominant inmates of the human breast, it hath produced more deeds—O many more! of kindness than of cruelty. It holds up for our example a standard of excellence, which, without its assistance, our inward consciousness of what is right and becoming might never have dictated. It teaches us, also, to respect ourselves, and our kind; for it is a poor mind, indeed, that from this employment of its faculties, learns not to dwell upon the noble view of human nature rather than the mean.

Universal, however, as this disposition undoubtedly is, with the generality of mankind it occupies itself in a passing and superficial way. Though a native trait of character or of passion is obvious to them as well as to the sage, yet to their minds it is but the visitor of

a moment; they look upon it singly and unconnected: and though this disposition, even so exercised, brings instruction as well as amusement, it is chiefly by storing up in their minds those ideas to which the instructions of others refer, that it can be eminently useful. Those who reflect and reason upon what human nature holds out to their observation, are comparatively but few. No stroke of nature which engages their attention stands insulated and alone. Each presents itself to them with many varied connections; and they comprehend not merely the immediate feeling which gave rise to it, but the relation of that feeling to others which are concealed. We wonder at the changes and caprices of men; they see in them nothing but what is natural and accountable. We stare upon some dark catastrophe of passion, as the Indians did upon an eclipse of the moon; they, conceiving the track of ideas through which the impassioned mind has passed, regard it like the philosopher who foretold the phenomenon. Knowing what situation of life he is about to be thrown into, they perceive in the man, who, like Hazael, says, "Is thy servant a dog, that he should do this thing?" the foul and ferocious murderer. A man of this contemplative character partakes, in some degree, of the entertainment of the Gods, who were supposed to look down upon this world and the inhabitants of it, as we do upon a theatrical exhibition; and if he is of a benevolent disposition, a good man struggling with, and triumphing over adversity, will be to him, also, the most delightful spectacle. But though this eagerness to observe their fellow-creatures in every situation, leads not the generality of mankind to reason and reflect; and those strokes of nature which they are so ready to remark, stand single and unconnected in their minds, yet they may be easily induced to do both; and there is no mode of instruction which they will so eagerly pursue, as that which lays open before them, in a more enlarged and connected view than their individual observations are capable of supplying—the varieties of the human mind. Above all, to be well exercised in this study will fit a man more particularly for the most important situations of life. He will prove for it the better Judge, the better Magistrate, the better Advocate; and as a ruler or conductor of other men, under every occurring circumstance, he will find himself the better enabled to fulfil his duty, and accomplish his designs. He will perceive the natural effect of every order that he issues upon the minds of his soldiers, his subjects, or his followers: and he will deal to others judgment tempered with mercy; that is to say, truly just; for justice appears to us severe only when it is imperfect.

In proportion as moral writers of every class have exercised within themselves this sympathetic propensity of our nature, and have attended to it in others, their works have been interesting and instructive. They have struck the imagination more forcibly, convinced the understanding more clearly, and more lastingly impressed the memory. If unseasoned with any reference to this, the fairy bowers of the poet, with all his gay images of delight, will be admired and forgotten; the important relations of the historian, and even the reasonings of the philosopher, will make a less permanent impression.

The historian points back to the men of other ages, and from the gradually clearing mist in which they are first discovered, like the mountains of a far distant land, the generations of the world are displayed to our mind's eye in grand and regular procession. But the transactions of men become interesting to us only as we are made acquainted with men themselves. Great and bloody battles are to us battles fought in the moon, if it is not impressed upon our minds, by some circumstances attending them, that men subject to like weaknesses and passions with ourselves, were the combatants.* The establishments of policy make little impression upon us, if we are left ignorant of the beings whom they affected. Even a very masterly drawn character will but slightly imprint upon our memory the great man it belongs to, if, in the account we receive of his life, those lesser circumstances are entirely neglected, which do best of all point out to us the dispositions and tempers of men. Some slight circumstance characteristic of the particular turn of a man's mind, which at first sight seems but little connected with the great events of his life, will often explain

* Let two great battles be described to us with all the force and clearness of the most able pen. In the first let the most admirable exertions of military skill in the General, and the most unshaken courage in the soldiers, gain over an equal or superior number of brave opponents a complete and glorious victory. In the second let the General be less scientific, and the soldiers less dauntless. Let them go into the field for a cause that is dear to them, and fight with the ardor which such a motive inspires, till discouraged with the many deaths around them, and the renovated pressure of the foe, some unlooked-for circumstance, trifling in itself, strikes their imagination at once: they are visited with the terrors of nature: their national pride, the honor of soldiership is forgotten; they fly like a fearful flock. Let some beloved chief then step forth, and call upon them by the love of their country, by the memory of their valiant fathers, by every thing that kindles in the bosom of man the high and generous passions: they gathered round him: and goaded by shame and indignation, returning again to the charge, with the fury of wild beasts rather than the courage of soldiers, bear down every thing before them. Which of these two battles will interest us the most? and which of them shall we remember the longest? The one will stand forth in the imagination of the reader like a rock of the desert, which points out to the far-removed traveller the country through which he has passed, when its lesser objects are obscured in the distance; whilst the other leaves no traces behind it, but in the minds of the scientific in war.

some of those events more clearly to our understanding, than the minute details of ostensible policy. A judicious selection of those circumstances which characterize the spirit of an associated mob, paltry and ludicrous as some of them may appear, will oftentimes convey to our minds a clearer idea why certain laws and privileges were demanded and agreed to, than a methodical explanation of their causes. An historian who has examined human nature himself, and likewise attends to the pleasure which developing and tracing it does ever convey to others, will employ our understanding as well as our memory with his pages; and if this is not done, he will impose upon the latter a very difficult task, in retaining what she is concerned with alone.

In argumentative and philosophical writings, the effect which the author's reasoning produces on our minds depends not entirely on the justness of it. The images and examples that he calls to his aid to explain and illustrate his meaning, will very much affect the attention we are able to bestow upon it, and consequently the quickness with which we shall apprehend, and the force with which it will impress us. These are selected from animated and unanimated nature, from the habits, manners, and characters of men; and though that image or example, whatever it may be in itself, which brings out his meaning most clearly, ought to be preferred before every other, yet of two equal in this respect, that which is drawn from the most interesting source will please us the most at the time, and most lastingly take hold of our minds. An argument supported with vivid and interesting illustration will long be remembered when many equally important and clear are forgotten; and a work where many such occur, will be held in higher estimation by the generality of men, than one, its superior, perhaps, in acuteness, perspicuity, and good sense.

Our desire to know what men are in the closet as well as in the field, by the blazing hearth and at the social board, as well as in the council and the throne, is very imperfectly gratified by real history; romance writers, therefore, stepped boldly forth to supply the deficiency; and tale writers and novel writers, of many descriptions, followed after. If they have not been very skilful in their delineations of nature; if they have represented men and women speaking and acting as men and women never did speak or act; if they have caricatured both our virtues and our vices; if they have given us such pure and unmixed, or such heterogeneous combinations of character as real life never presented, and yet have pleased and interested us, let it not be imputed to the dulness of man in discerning what is genuinely natural in himself. There are many inclinations belonging to us, besides this great master-propensity of which I am treating. Our love of the grand, the beautiful, the novel, and above all of the marvellous, is very strong; and if we are richly fed with what we have a good relish for, we may be weaned to forget our native and favourite aliment. Yet we can never so far forget it, but that we shall cling to, and acknowledge it again, whenever it is presented before us. In a work abounding with the marvellous and unnatural, if the author has any how stumbled upon an unsophisticated genuine stroke of nature, we shall immediately perceive and be delighted with it, though we are foolish enough to admire, at the same time, all the nonsense with which it is surrounded. After all the wonderful incidents, dark mysteries, and secrets revealed, which eventful novel so liberally presents to us; after the beautiful fairy ground, and even the grand and sublime scenes of nature with which descriptive novel so often enchants us; those works which most strongly characterize human nature in the middling and lower classes of society, where it is to be discovered by stronger and more unequivocal marks, will ever be the most popular. For though great pains have been taken in our higher sentimental novels to interest us in the delicacies, embarrassments, and artificial distresses of the more refined part of society, they have never been able to cope in the public opinion with these. The one is a dressed and beautiful pleasure ground, in which we are enchanted for a while, amongst the delicate and unknown plants of artful cultivation: the other is a rough forest of our native land; the oak, the elm, the hazel, and the bramble are there; and amidst the endless varieties of its paths we can wander forever. Into whatever scenes the novelist may conduct us, what objects soever he may present to our view, still is our attention most sensibly awake to every touch faithful to nature; still are we upon the watch for everything that speaks to us of ourselves.

The fair field of what is properly called poetry, is enriched with so many beauties, that in it we are often tempted to forget what we really are, and what kind of beings we belong to. Who in the enchanted regions of simile, metaphor, allegory, and description, can remember the plain order of things in this every-day world? From heroes whose majestic forms rise like a lofty tower, whose eyes are lightning, whose arms are irresistible, whose course is like the storms of heaven, bold and exalted sentiments we shall readily receive; and shall not examine them very accurately by that rule of nature which our own breast prescribes to us. A shepherd, whose sheep, with fleeces of purest snow, browze the flowery herbage of the most beautiful vallies; whose flute is ever melodious, and whose shepherdess is ever crowned with roses; whose every care is love, will not be called very strictly to account for the loftiness and refinement of his thoughts. The fair Nymph who sighs out her sorrows to the conscious and compassionate wilds; whose eyes gleam like the bright drops of heaven; whose loose tresses stream to the breeze, may say what she pleases with impunity. I will

venture, however, to say, that amidst all this decoration and ornament, all this loftiness and refinement, let one simple trait of the human heart, one expression of passion genuine and true to nature, be introduced, and it will stand forth alone in the boldness of reality, whilst the false and unnatural around it, fade away upon every side, like the rising exhalations of the morning. With admiration, and often with enthusiasm, we proceed on our way through the grand and the beautiful images, raised to our imagination by the lofty epic muse: but what, even here, are those things that strike upon the heart; that we feel and remember? Neither the descriptions of war, the sound of the trumpet, the clanging of arms, the combat of heroes, nor the death of the mighty, will interest our minds like the fall of the feeble stranger, who simply expresses the anguish of his soul, at the thoughts of that far-distant home which he must never return to again, and closes his eyes amongst the ignoble and forgotten; like the timid stripling goaded by the shame of reproach, who urges his trembling steps to the fight, and falls like a tender flower before the first blast of winter. How often will some simple pictures of this kind be all that remains upon our minds of the terrific and magnificent battle, whose description we have read with admiration? How comes it that we relish so much the episodes of an heroic poem? It cannot merely be that we are pleased with a resting place where we enjoy the variety of contrast; for were the poem of the simple and familiar kind, and an episode after the heroic style introduced into it, ninety readers out of a hundred would pass over it altogether. It is not that we meet such a story, so situated, with a kind of sympathetic good will, as in passing through a country of castles and of palaces, we should pop unawares upon some humble cottage, resembling the dwellings of our own native land, and gaze upon it with affection. The highest pleasures we receive from poetry, as well as from the real objects which surround us in the world, are derived from the sympathetic interest we all take in beings like ourselves: and I will even venture to say, that were the grandest scenes which can enter into the imagination of man, presented to our view, and all reference to man completely shut out from our thoughts, the objects that composed it would convey to our minds little better than dry ideas of magnitude, color, and form; and the remembrance of them would rest upon our minds like the measurement and distances of the planets.

If the study of human nature then, is so useful to the poet, the novelist, the historian, and the philosopher, of how much greater importance must it be to the dramatic writer? To them it is a powerful auxiliary, to him it is the centre and strength of the battle. If characteristic views of human nature enliven not their pages, there are many excellencies with which they can, in some degree, make up for the deficiency: it is what we receive from them with pleasure rather than demand. But in his works, no richness of invention, harmony of language, nor grandeur of sentiment will supply the place of faithfully delineated nature. The poet and the novelist may represent to you their great characters from the cradle to the tomb. They may represent them in any mood or temper, and under the influence of any passion which they see proper, without being obliged to put words into their mouths, those great betrayers of the feigned and adopted. They may relate every circumstance, however trifling and minute, that serves to develope their tempers and dispositions. They tell us what kind of people they intend their men and women to be, and as such we receive them. If they are to move us with any scene of distress, every circumstance regarding the parties concerned in it, how they looked, how they moved, how they sighed, how the tears gushed from their eyes, how the very light and shadow fell upon them, is carefully described; and the few things that are given them to say along with all this assistance, must be very unnatural indeed if we refuse to sympathize with them. But the characters of the drama must speak directly for themselves. Under the influence of every passion, humor, and impression; in the artificial veilings of hypocrisy and ceremony, in the openness of freedom and confidence, and in the lonely hour of meditation they speak. He who made us hath placed within our breasts a judge that judges instantaneously of every thing they say. We expect to find them creatures like ourselves; and if they are untrue to nature, we feel that we are imposed upon.

As in other works deficiency in characteristic truth may be compensated by excellencies of a different kind, in the drama, characteristic truth will compensate every other defect. Nay, it will do what appears a contradiction; one strong genuine stroke of nature will cover a multitude of sins, even against nature herself. When we meet in some scene of a good play a very fine stroke of this kind, we are apt to become so intoxicated with it, and so perfectly convinced of the author's great knowledge of the human heart, that we are unwilling to suppose the whole of it has not been suggested by the same penetrating spirit. Many well-meaning enthusiastic critics have given themselves a great deal of trouble in this way; and have shut their eyes most ingeniously against the fair light of nature for the very love of it. They have converted, in their great zeal, sentiments palpably false, both in regard to the character and situation of the persons who utter them, sentiments which a child or a clown would detect, into the most skilful depictments of the heart. I can think of no stronger instance to show how powerfully this love of nature dwells within us.*

* It appears to me a very strong testimony of the excellence of our great national Dramatist, that so many people have been employed in find-

Formed as we are with these sympathetic propensities in regard to our own species, it is not at all wonderful that theatrical exhibition has become the grand and favourite amusement of every nation into which it has been introduced. Savages will, in the wild contortions of a dance, shape out some rude story expressive of character or passion, and such a dance will give more delight to their companions than the most artful exertions of agility. Children in their gambols will make out a mimic representation of the manners, characters, and passions of grown men and women; and such a pastime will animate and delight them much more than a treat of the daintiest sweetmeats, or the handling of the gaudiest toys. Eagerly as it is enjoyed by the rude and the young, to the polished and the ripe in years it is still the most interesting amusement. Our taste for it is durable as it is universal. Independently of those circumstances which first introduced it, the world would not have long been without it. The progress of society would soon have brought it forth; and men, in the whimsical decorations of fancy, would have displayed the characters and actions of their heroes, the folly and absurdity of their fellow-citizens, had no Priests of Bacchus ever existed.*

In whatever age or country the Drama might have taken its rise, Tragedy would have been the first-born of its children. For every nation has its great men, and its great events upon record; and to represent their own forefathers struggling with those difficulties, and braving those dangers, of which they have heard with admiration, and the effects of which they still, perhaps, experience, would certainly have been the most animating subject for the poet, and the most interesting for his audience, even independently of the natural inclination we all so universally show for scenes of horror and distress, of passion and heroic exertion. Tragedy would have been the first child of the Drama, for the same reasons that have made heroic ballad, with all its battles, murders, and disasters, the earliest poetical compositions of every country.

We behold heroes and great men at a distance, unmasked by those small but distinguishing features of the mind, which give a certain individuality to such an infinite variety of similar beings, in the near and familiar intercourse of life. They appear to us from this view like distant mountains, whose dark outlines we trace in the clear horizon, but the varieties of whose roughened sides, shaded with heath and brushwood, and seamed with many a cleft, we perceive not. When accidental anecdote reveals to us any weakness or peculiarity belonging to them, we start upon it like a discovery. They are made known to us in history only, by the great events they are connected with, and the part they have taken in extraordinary or important transactions. Even in poetry and romance, with the exception of some love story interwoven with the main events of their lives, they are seldom more intimately made known to us. To Tragedy it belongs to lead them

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ing out obscure and refined beauties, in what appear to ordinary observation his very defects. Men, it may be said, do so merely to show their own superior penetration and ingenuity. But granting this; what could make other men listen to them, and listen so greedily too, if it were not that they have received from the works of Shakspeare, pleasure far beyond what the most perfect poetical compositions of a different character can afford?

*Though the progress of society would have given us the Drama, independently of the particular cause of its first commencement, the peculiar circumstances connected with its origin have had considerable influence upon its character and style, in the ages through which it has passed even to our day, and still will continue to affect it. Homer had long preceded the dramatic poets of Greece; poetry was in a high state of cultivation when they began to write, and their style, the construction of their pieces, and the characters of their heroes were different from what they would have been, had theatrical exhibitions been the invention of an earlier age or a ruder people. Their works were represented to an audience, already accustomed to hear long poems rehearsed at their public games, and the feasts of their gods. A play, with the principal characters of which they were previously acquainted; in which their great men and heroes, in the most beautiful language, complained of their rigorous fate, but piously submitted to the will of the gods; in which sympathy was chiefly excited by tender and affecting sentiments; in which strong bursts of passion were few; and in which whole scenes frequently passed, without giving the actors any thing to do but to speak, was not too insipid for them. Had the drama been the invention of a less cultivated nation, more of action and of passion would have been introduced into it. It would have been more irregular, more imperfect, more varied, more interesting. From poor beginnings it would have advanced in a progressive state: and succeeding poets, not having those polished and admired originals to look back upon, would have presented their respective contemporaries with the produce of a free and unbridled imagination. A different class of poets would most likely have been called into existence. The latent powers of men are called forth by contemplating those works in which they find any thing congenial to their own peculiar talents; and if the field, wherein they could have worked, is already enriched with a produce unsuited to their cultivation, they think not of entering it at all. Men, therefore, whose natural turn of mind led them to labor, to reason, to refine and exalt, have caught their animation from the beauties of the Grecian Drama; and they who, perhaps, ought only to have been our Critics have become our Poets. I mean not, however, in any degree to depreciate the works of the ancients; a great deal we have gained by those beautiful compositions; and what we have lost by them it is impossible to compute. Very strong genius will sometimes break through every disadvantage of circumstances: Shakspeare has arisen in this country, and we ought not to complain.

forward to our nearer regard, in all the distinguishing varieties which nearer inspection discovers; with the passions, the humors, the weaknesses, the prejudices of men. It is for her to present to us the great and magnanimous hero, who appears to our distant view as a superior being, as a god, softened down with those smaller frailties and imperfections which enable us to glory in, and claim kindred to his virtues. It is for her to exhibit to us the daring and ambitious man planning his dark designs, and executing his bloody purposes, marked with those appropriate characteristics, which distinguish him as an individual of that class; and agitated with those varied passions, which disturb the mind of man when he is engaged in the commission of such deeds. It is for her to point out to us the brave and impetuous warrior struck with those visitations of nature, which, in certain situations, will unnerve the strongest arm, and make the boldest heart tremble. It is for her to show the tender, gentle, and unassuming mind animated with that fire which, by the provocation of circumstances, will give to the kindest heart the ferocity and keenness of a tiger. It is for her to present to us the great and striking characters that are to be found amongst men, in a way which the poet, the novelist, and the historian can but imperfectly attempt. But above all, to her, and to her only it belongs to unveil to us the human mind under the dominion of those strong and fixed passions, which, seemingly unprovoked by outward circumstances, will from small beginnings brood within the breast, till all the better dispositions, all the fair gifts of nature are borne down before them; those passions which conceal themselves from the observation of men; which cannot unbosom themselves even to the dearest friend; and can, oftentimes, only give their fulness vent in the lonely desert, or in the darkness of midnight. For who hath followed the great man into his secret closet, or stood by the side of his nightly couch, and heard those exclamations of the soul which heaven alone may hear, that the historian should be able to inform us? and what form of story, what mode of rehearsed speech will communicate to us those feelings, whose irregular bursts, abrupt transitions, sudden pauses, and half-uttered suggestions, scorn all harmony of measured verse, all method and order of relation?

On the first part of this task her Bards have eagerly exerted their abilities: and some amongst them, taught by strong original genius to deal immediately with human nature and their own hearts, have labored in it successfully. But in presenting to us those views of great characters, and of the human mind in difficult and trying situations which peculiarly belong to Tragedy, the far greater proportion, even of those who may be considered as respectable dramatic poets, have very much failed. From the beauty of those original dramas to which they have ever looked back with admiration, they have been tempted to prefer the embellishments of poetry to faithfully delineated nature. They have been more occupied in considering the works of the great dramatists who have gone before them, and the effects produced by their writings, than the varieties of human character which first furnished materials for those works, or those principles in the mind of man by means of which such effects were produced. Neglecting the boundless variety of nature, certain strong outlines of character, certain bold features of passion, certain grand vicissitudes, and striking dramatic situations, have been repeated from one generation to another; whilst a pompous and solemn gravity, which they have supposed to be necessary for the dignity of tragedy, has excluded almost entirely from their works those smaller touches of nature, which so well develope the mind; and by showing men in their hours of state and exertion only, they have consequently shown them imperfectly. Thus, great and magnanimous heroes, who bear with majestic equanimity every vicissitude of fortune; who in every temptation and trial stand forth in unshaken virtue like a rock buffeted by the waves; who, encompassed with the most terrible evils, in calm possession of their souls, reason upon the difficulties of their state; and, even upon the brink of destruction, pronounce long eulogiums on virtue, in the most eloquent and beautiful language, have been held forth to our view as objects of imitation and interest, as though they had entirely forgotten that it is only for creatures like ourselves that we feel, and therefore, only from creatures like ourselves that we receive the instruction of example.* Thus passionate and impetuous warriors, who are proud, irritable, and vindictive, but generous, daring, and disinterested; setting their lives at a pin's fee for the good of others, but incapable of curbing their own humour of a moment to gain the whole world for themselves; who will pluck the orbs of heaven from their places, and crush the whole universe in one grasp, are called forth to kindle in our souls the generous contempt of everything abject and base; but with an effect proportionably feeble, as the hero is made to exceed in courage and

* To a being perfectly free from all human infirmity our sympathy refuses to extend. Our Saviour himself, whose character is so beautiful, and so harmoniously consistent; in whom, with outward proofs of his mission less strong than those that are offered to us, I should still be compelled to believe, from being utterly unable to conceive how the idea of such a character could enter into the imagination of man, never touches the heart more nearly than when he says, "Father, let this cup pass from me." Had he been represented to us in all the unshaken strength of these tragic heroes, his disciples would have made fewer converts, and his precepts would have been listened to coldly. Plays in which heroes of this kind are held forth, and whose aim is, indeed, honorable and praiseworthy, have been admired by the cultivated and refined, but the tears of the simple, the applauses of the young and untaught have been wanting.

fire what the standard of humanity will agree to.* Thus, tender and pathetic lovers, full of the most gentle affections, the most amiable dispositions, and the most exquisite feelings; who present their defenceless bosoms to the storms of this rude world in all the graceful weakness of sensibility, are made to sigh out their sorrows in one unvaried strain of studied pathos, whilst this constant demand upon our feelings makes us absolutely incapable of answering it.† Thus, also, tyrants are represented as monsters of cruelty, unmixed with any feelings of humanity; and villains as delighting in all manner of treachery and deceit, and acting upon many occasions, for the very love of villany itself; though the perfectly wicked are as ill fitted for the purposes of warning, as the perfectly virtuous are for those of example.‡ This spirit of imitation, and attention to effect, has likewise confined them very much in their choice of situations and events to bring their great characters into action: rebellions, conspiracies, contentions for empire, and rivalships in love, have alone been thought worthy of trying those heroes; and palaces and dungeons the only places magnificent or solemn enough for them to appear in.

They have, indeed, from this regard to the works of preceding authors, and great attention to the beauties of composition, and to dignity of design, enriched their plays with much striking and sometimes sublime imagery, lofty thoughts, and virtuous sentiments; but in striving so eagerly to excel in those things that belong to tragedy in common with many other compositions, they have very much neglected those that are peculiarly her own. As far as they have been led aside from the first labors of a tragic poet by a desire to communicate more perfect moral instruction, their motive has been respectable, and they merit our esteem. But this praiseworthy end has been injured instead of promoted by their mode of pursuing it. Every species of moral writing has its own way of conveying instruction, which it can never, but with disadvantage, exchange for any other. The Drama improves us by the knowledge we acquire of our own minds, from the natural desire we have to look into the thoughts, and observe the behaviour of others. Tragedy brings to our view, men placed in those elevated situations, exposed to those great trials, and engaged in those extraordinary transactions, in which few of us are called upon to act. As examples applicable to ourselves, therefore, they can but feebly affect us; it is only from the enlargement of our ideas in regard to human nature, from that admiration of virtue and abhorrence of vice which they excite, that we can expect to be improved by them. But if they are not represented to us as real and natural characters, the lessons we are taught from their conduct and their sentiments will be no more to us, than those which we receive from the pages of the poet or the moralist.

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* In all burlesque imitations of tragedy, those plays in which this hero is pre-eminent, are always exposed to bear the great brunt of the ridicule, which proves how popular they have been, and how many poets, and good ones too, have been employed upon them. That they have been so popular, however, is not owing to the intrinsic merit of the characters they represent, but their opposition to those mean and contemptible qualities belonging to human nature, of which we are most ashamed. Besides, there is something in the human mind, independently of its love of applause, which inclines it to boast. This is ever the attendant of that elasticity of soul, which makes us bound up from the touch of oppression; and if there is nothing in the accompanying circumstances to create disgust, or suggest suspicions of their sincerity, (as in real life is commonly the case,) we are very apt to be carried along with the boasting of others. Let us in good earnest believe that a man is capable of achieving all that human courage can achieve, and we shall suffer him to talk of impossibilities. Amidst all their pomp of words, therefore, our admiration of such heroes is readily excited, (for the understanding is more easily deceived than the heart;) but how stands our sympathy affected? As no caution nor foresight, on their own account, is ever suffered to occupy the thoughts of such bold disinterested beings, we are the more inclined to care for them, and to take an interest in their fortune through the course of the play: yet, as their souls are unappalled by any thing; as pain and death are not at all regarded by them; and as we have seen them very ready to plunge their own swords into their own bosoms, on no very weighty occasion, perhaps, their death distresses us but little, and they commonly fall unwept.

† Were it not, that in tragedies where these heroes preside, the same soft tones of sorrow are so often repeated in our ears, till we are perfectly tired of it, they are more fitted to interest us than any other; both because in seeing them, we own the ties of kindred between ourselves and the frail mortals we lament; and sympathize with the weakness of mortality unmixed with any thing to degrade or disgust; and also, because the misfortunes, which form the story of the play, are frequently of the more familiar and domestic kind. A king driven from his throne, will not move our sympathy so strongly, as a private man torn from the bosom of his family.

‡ I have said nothing here in regard to female character, though in many tragedies it is brought forward as the principal one of the piece, because what I have said of the above characters is likewise applicable to it. I believe there is no man that ever lived, who has behaved in a certain manner on a certain occasion, who has not had amongst women some corresponding spirit, who, on the like occasion, and every way similarly circumstanced, would have behaved in the like manner. With some degree of softening and refinement, each class of the tragic heroes I have mentioned has its corresponding one amongst the heroines. The tender and pathetic no doubt has the most numerous, but the great and magnanimous is not without it, and the passionate and impetuous boasts of one by no means inconsiderable in numbers, and drawn sometimes to the full as passionate and impetuous as itself.

But the last part of the task which I have mentioned as peculiarly belonging to tragedy, unveiling the human mind under the dominion of those strong and fixed passions, which, seemingly unprovoked by outward circumstances, will from small beginnings brood within the breast, till all the better dispositions, all the fair gifts of nature are borne down before them, her poets in general have entirely neglected, and even her first and greatest have but imperfectly attempted. They have made use of the passions to mark their several characters, and animate their scenes, rather than to open to our view the nature and portraitures of those great disturbers of the human breast, with whom we are all, more or less, called upon to contend. With their strong and obvious features, therefore, they have been presented to us, stripped almost entirely of those less obtrusive, but not less discriminating traits, which mark them in their actual operation. To trace them in their rise and progress in the heart, seems but rarely to have been the object of any dramatist. We commonly find the characters of a tragedy affected by the passions in a transient, loose, unconnected manner; or if they are represented as under the permanent influence of the more powerful ones, they are generally introduced to our notice in the very height of their fury, when all that timidity, irresolution, distrust, and a thousand delicate traits, which make the infancy of every great passion more interesting, perhaps, than its full-blown strength, are fled. The impassioned character is generally brought into view under those irresistible attacks of their power, which it is impossible to repel; whilst those gradual steps that lead him into this state, in some of which a stand might have been made against the foe, are left entirely in the shade. Those passions that may be suddenly excited, and are of short duration, as anger, fear, and oftentimes jealousy, may in this manner be fully represented; but those great masters of the soul, ambition, hatred, love, every passion that is permanent in its nature, and varied in progress, if represented to us but in one stage of its course, is represented imperfectly. It is a characteristic of the more powerful passions, that they will increase and nourish themselves on very slender aliment; it is from within that they are chiefly supplied with what they feed on; and it is in contending with opposite passions and affections of the mind that we best discover their strength, not with events. But in tragedy it is events more frequently than opposite affections which are opposed to them; and those often of such force and magnitude, that the passions themselves are almost obscured by the splendor and importance of the transactions to which they are attached. Besides being thus confined and mutilated, the passions have been, in the greater part of our tragedies, deprived of the very power of making themselves known. Bold and figurative language belongs peculiarly to them. Poets, admiring those bold expressions which a mind, laboring with ideas too strong to be conveyed in the ordinary forms of speech, wildly throws out, taking earth, sea, and sky, every thing great and terrible in nature, to image forth the violence of its feelings, borrowed them gladly, to adorn the calm sentiments of their premeditated song. It has therefore been thought that the less animated parts of tragedy might be so embellished and enriched. In doing this, however, the passions have been robbed of their native prerogative; and in adorning with their strong figures and lofty expressions the calm speeches of the unruffled, it is found that, when they are called upon to raise their voice, the power of distinguishing themselves has been taken away. This is an injury by no means compensated, but very greatly aggravated, by embellishing, in return, the speeches of passion with the ingenious conceits, and complete similes of premeditated thought.* There are many other things regarding the manner in which dramatic poets have generally brought forward the passions in tragedy, to the greatest prejudice of that effect they are naturally fitted to produce upon the mind, which I forbear to mention, lest they should too much increase the length of this discourse; and leave an impression on the mind of my reader, that I write more in the spirit of criticism than becomes one, who is about to bring before the public a work, with, doubtless, many faults and imperfections on its head.

From this general view, which I have endeavoured to communicate to my reader of tragedy, and those principles in the human mind upon which the success of her efforts depends, I have been led to believe, that an attempt to write a series of tragedies, of simpler construction, less embellished with poetical decorations, less constrained by that lofty seriousness which has so generally been considered as necessary for the support of tragic dignity, and in which the chief object should be to delineate the progress of the higher passions in the human breast, each play exhibiting a particular passion, might not be unacceptable to the public. And I have been the more readily induced to act upon this idea, because I am confident, that tragedy, written upon this plan, is fitted to produce stronger moral effect than upon any other. I have said that tragedy, in representing to us great characters struggling with difficulties, and placed in situations of eminence and danger, in which few of us have any chance of being called upon to act, conveys its moral efficacy to our minds by the

* This, perhaps, more than any thing else has injured the higher scenes of tragedy. For having made such free use of bold hyperbolical language in the inferior parts, the poet, when he arrives at the highly impassioned, sinks into total inability: or if he will force himself to rise still higher on the wing, he flies beyond nature altogether, into the regions of bombast and nonsense.

enlarged views which it gives to us of human nature, by the admiration of virtue and execration of vice which it excites, and not by the examples it holds up for our immediate application. But in opening to us the heart of man under the influence of those passions to which all are liable, this is not the case. Those strong passions that, with small assistance from outward circumstances, work their way in the heart till they become the tyrannical masters of it, carry on a similar operation in the breast of the Monarch, and the man of low degree. It exhibits to us the mind of man in that state when we are most curious to look into it, and is equally interesting to all. Discrimination of character is a turn of mind, though more common than we are aware of, which every body does not possess; but to the expressions of passion, particularly strong passion, the dullest mind is awake; and its true unsophisticated language the dullest understanding will not misinterpret. To hold up for our example those peculiarities in disposition and modes of thinking which nature has fixed upon us, or which long and early habit has incorporated with our original selves, is almost desiring us to remove the everlasting mountains, to take away the native land-marks of the soul; but representing the passions, brings before us the operation of a tempest that rages out its time and passes away. We cannot, it is true, amidst its wild uproar, listen to the voice of reason, and save ourselves from destruction; but we can foresee its coming, we can mark its rising signs, we can know the situations that will most expose us to its rage, and we can shelter our heads from the coming blast. To change a certain disposition of mind which makes us view objects in a particular light, and thereby, oftentimes, unknown to ourselves, influences our conduct and manners, is almost impossible; but in checking and subduing those visitations of the soul, whose causes and effects we are aware of, every one may make considerable progress, if he proves not entirely successful. Above all, looking back to the first rise, and tracing the progress of passion, points out to us those stages in the approach of the enemy, when he might have been combated most successfully; and where the suffering him to pass may be considered as occasioning all the misery that ensues.

Comedy presents to us men, as we find them in the ordinary intercourse of the world, with all the weaknesses, follies, caprice, prejudices, and absurdities which a near and familiar view of them discovers. It is her task to exhibit them engaged in the busy turmoil of ordinary life, harassing and perplexing themselves with the endless pursuits of avarice, vanity, and pleasure; and engaged with those smaller trials of the mind, by which men are most apt to be overcome, and from which he, who could have supported with honor the attack of great occasions, will oftentimes come off most shamefully foiled. It belongs to her to show the varied fashions and manners of the world, as, from the spirit of vanity, caprice, and imitation they go on in swift and endless succession; and those disagreeable or absurd peculiarities attached to particular classes and conditions in society. It is for her also to represent men under the influence of the stronger passions; and to trace the rise and progress of them in the heart, in such situations, and attended with such circumstances, as take off their sublimity, and the interest we naturally take in a perturbed mind. It is hers to exhibit those terrible tyrants of the soul, whose ungovernable rage has struck us so often with dismay, like wild beasts tied to a post, who growl and paw before us, for our derision and sport. In pourtraying the characters of men she has this advantage over tragedy, that the smallest traits of nature, with the smallest circumstances which serve to bring them forth, may by her be displayed, however ludicrous and trivial in themselves, without any ceremony. And in developing the passions she enjoys a similar advantage; for they often more strongly betray themselves when touched by those small and familiar occurrences which cannot, consistently with the effect it is intended to produce, be admitted into tragedy.

As tragedy has been very much cramped in her endeavors to exalt and improve the mind, by that spirit of imitation and confinement in her successive writers, which the beauty of her earliest poets first gave rise to, so comedy has been led aside from her best purposes by a different temptation. Those endless changes in fashions and in manners, which offer such obvious and ever-new subjects of ridicule; that infinite variety of tricks and manœuvres by which the ludicrous may be produced, and curiosity and laughter excited; the admiration we so generally bestow upon satirical remark, pointed repartee, and whimsical combinations of ideas, have too often led her to forget the warmer interest we feel, and the more profitable lessons we receive, from genuine representations of nature. The most interesting and instructive class of comedy, therefore, the real characteristic, has been very much neglected, whilst satirical, witty, sentimental, and, above all, busy or circumstantial comedy, have usurped the exertions of the far greater proportion of Dramatic Writers.

In Satirical Comedy, sarcastic and severe reflections on the actions and manners of men, introduced with neatness, force, and poignancy of expression, into a lively and well-supported dialogue, of whose gay surface they are the embossed ornaments, make the most important and studied part of the work: character is a thing talked of rather than shown. The persons of the drama are indebted for the discovery of their peculiarities to what is said of them, rather than to any thing they are made to say or do for themselves. Much incident being unfavourable for studied and elegant dialogue, the plot is commonly simple, and the few events that compose it nei-

ther interesting nor striking. It only affords us that kind of moral instruction which an essay or a poem could as well have conveyed, and, though amusing in the closet, is but feebly attractive in the Theatre.*

In what I have termed Witty Comedy, every thing is light, playful, and easy. Strong, decided condemnation of vice is too weighty and material to dance upon the surface of that stream, whose shallow currents sparkle in perpetual sunbeams, and cast up their bubbles to the light. Two or three persons of quick thought, and whimsical fancy, who perceive instantaneously the various connections of every passing idea, and the significations, natural or artificial, which single expressions, or particular forms of speech can possibly convey, take the lead through the whole, and seem to communicate their own peculiar talent to every creature in the play. The plot is most commonly feeble rather than simple, the incidents being numerous enough, but seldom striking or varied. To amuse, and only to amuse, is its aim; it pretends not to interest nor instruct. It pleases when we read, more than when we see it represented; and pleases still more when we take it up by accident, and read but a scene at a time.

Sentimental Comedy treats of those embarrassments, difficulties, and scruples, which, though sufficiently distressing to the delicate minds who entertain them, are not powerful enough to gratify the sympathetic desire we all feel to look into the heart of man in difficult and trying situations, which is the sound basis of tragedy, and are destitute of that seasoning of the lively and ludicrous, which prevents the ordinary transactions of comedy from becoming insipid. In real life, those who, from the peculiar frame of their minds, feel most of this refined distress, are not generally communicative upon the subject; and those who do feel and talk about it at the same time, if any such there be, seldom find their friends much inclined to listen to them. It is not to be supposed, then, long conversations upon the stage about small sentimental niceties, can be generally interesting. I am afraid plays of this kind, as well as works of a similar nature, in other departments of literature, have only tended to increase amongst us a set of sentimental hypocrites; who are the same persons of this age that would have been the religious ones of another; and are daily doing morality the same kind of injury, by substituting the particular excellence which they pretend to possess, for plain simple uprightness and rectitude.

In Busy or Circumstantial Comedy, all those ingenious contrivances of lovers, guardians governantes, and chambermaids; that ambushed bush-fighting amongst closets, screens, chests, easy-chairs, and toilet-tables, form a gay, varied game of dexterity and invention: which, to those who have played at hide and seek, who have crouched down, with beating heart, in a dark corner, whilst the enemy groped near the spot; who have joined their busy school-mates in many a deep-laid plan to deceive, perplex, and torment the unhappy mortals deputed to have the charge of them, cannot be seen with indifference. Like an old hunter, who pricks up his ears at the sound of the chase, and starts away from the path of his journey, so, leaving all wisdom and criticism behind us, we follow the varied changes of the plot, and stop not for reflection. The studious man who wants a cessation from thought, the indolent man who dislikes it, and all those who, from habit or circumstances, live in a state of divorce from their own minds, are pleased with an amusement, in which they have nothing to do but to open their eyes and behold. The moral tendency of it, however, is very faulty. That mockery of age and domestic authority, so constantly held forth, has a very bad effect upon the younger part of an audience; and that continual lying and deceit in the first characters of the piece, which is necessary for conducting the plot, has a most pernicious one.

But Characteristic Comedy, which represents to us this motley world of men and women in which we live, under those circumstances of ordinary and familiar life most favourable to the discovery of the human heart, offers to us a wide field of instruction adapted to general application. We find in its varied scenes an exercise of the mind analogous to that which we all, less or more, find out for ourselves, amidst the mixed groups of people whom we meet with in society; and which I have already mentioned as an exercise universally pleasing to man. As the distinctions which it is its highest aim to discriminate, are those of nature and not situation, they are judged of by all ranks of men; for a peasant will very clearly perceive in the character of a peer those native peculiarities which belong to him as a man, though he is entirely at a loss in all that regards his manners and address as a nobleman. It illustrates to us the general remarks we have made upon men; and in it we behold, spread before us, plans of those original ground-works, upon which the general ideas we have been taught to conceive of mankind, are founded. It stands but little in need of busy plot, extraordinary incidents, witty repartee, or studied sentiments. It naturally produces for itself all that it requires. Characters, who are to speak for themselves, who are to be known by their own words and actions, not by the accounts that are given of them by others, cannot well be developed without considerable variety of judicious incident: a smile that is raised by some trait of undisguised nature, and a laugh that is provoked by some ludicrous effect of passion, or clashing of opposite

* These plays are generally the work of men, whose judgment and acute observation enable them admirably well to generalize, and apply to classes of men the remarks they have made upon individuals; yet know not how to dress up, with any natural congruity, an imaginary individual in the attributes they have assigned to those classes.

characters, will be more pleasing to the generality of men, than either the one or the other when occasioned by a play upon words, or a whimsical combination of ideas; and to behold the operation and effects of the different propensities and weaknesses of men, will naturally call up in the mind of the spectator moral reflections more applicable, and more impressive than all the high-sounding sentiments with which the graver scenes of Satirical and Sentimental Comedy are so frequently interlarded. It is much to be regretted, however, that the eternal introduction of love as the grand business of the Drama, and the consequent necessity for making the chief persons in it, such, in regard to age, appearance, manners, dispositions, and endowments, as are proper for interesting lovers, has occasioned so much insipid similarity in the higher characters. It is chiefly, therefore, on the second and inferior characters, that the efforts, even of our best poets, have been exhausted: and thus we are called upon to be interested in the fortune of one man, whilst our chief attention is directed to the character of another, which produces a disunion of ideas in the mind, injurious to the general effect of the whole. From this cause, also, those characteristic varieties have been very much neglected, which men present to us in the middle stages of life; when they are too old for lovers or the confidents of lovers, and too young to be the fathers, uncles, and guardians, who are contrasted with them; but when they are still in full vigour of mind, eagerly engaged with the world, joining the activity of youth to the providence of age, and offer to our attention objects sufficiently interesting and instructive. It is to be regretted that strong contrasts of character are too often attempted, instead of those harmonious shades of it, which nature so beautifully varies, and which we so greatly delight in, whenever we clearly distinguish them. It is to be regretted that in place of those characters, which present themselves to the imagination of a writer from his general observations upon mankind, inferior poets have so often pourtrayed with senseless minuteness the characters of particular individuals. We are pleased with the eccentricities of individuals in real life, and also in history or biography, but in fictitious writings we regard them with suspicion; and no representation of nature, that corresponds not with some of our general ideas in regard to it, will either instruct or inform us. When the original of such characters are known and remembered, the plays in which they are introduced are oftentimes popular; and their temporary success has induced a still inferior class of poets to believe, that, by making men strange, and unlike the rest of the world, they have made great discoveries, and mightily enlarged the boundaries of dramatic character. They will, therefore, distinguish one man from another by some strange whim or imagination, which is ever uppermost in his thoughts, and influences every action of his life; by some singular opinion, perhaps, about politics, fashions, or the position of the stars; by some strong unaccountable love for one thing, or aversion from another; entirely forgetting that, such singularities, if they are to be found in nature, can no where be sought for, with such probability of success, as in Bedlam. Above all it is to be regretted that those adventitious distinctions amongst men, of age, fortune, rank, profession, and country, are so often brought forward in preference to the great original distinctions of nature, and our scenes so often filled with courtiers, lawyers, citizens, Frenchmen, &c. &c. with all the characteristics of their respective conditions, such as they have been represented from time immemorial. This has introduced a great sameness into many of our plays, which all the changes of new fashions burlesqued, and new customs turned into ridicule, cannot conceal.

In comedy, the stronger passions, love excepted, are seldom introduced but in a passing way. We have short bursts of anger, fits of jealousy and impatience; violent passion of any continuance we seldom find. When this is attempted, however, forgetting that mode of exposing the weakness of the human mind, which peculiarly belongs to her, it is too frequently done in the serious spirit of tragedy; and this has produced so many of those serious comic plays, which so much divide and distract our attention.* Yet we

* Such plays, however excellent the parts may be of which they are composed, can never produce the same strength and unity of effect upon our minds which we receive from plays of a simpler undivided construction. If the serious and distressing scenes make a deep impression, we do not find ourselves in a humour for the comic ones that succeed; and if the comic scenes enliven us greatly, we feel tardy and unalert in bringing back our minds to a proper tone for the serious. As in tragedy we smile at those native traits of character, or that occasional sprightliness of dialogue, which are sometimes introduced to animate her less interesting parts, so may we be moved by comedy; but our tears should be called forth by those gentle strokes of nature, which come at once with kindred kindness on the heart, and are quickly succeeded by smiles. Like a small summer-cloud, whose rain-drops sparkle in the sun, and which swiftly passes away, is the genuine pathetic of comedy; the gathering foreseen storm, that darkens the whole face of the sky, belongs to tragedy alone. It is often observed, I confess, that we are more apt to be affected by those scenes of distress which we meet with in comedy, than the high-wrought woes of tragedy; and I believe it is true. But this arises from the woes of tragedy being so often appropriated to high and mighty personages, and strained beyond the modesty of nature, in order to suit their great dignity; or, from the softened griefs of more gentle and familiar characters being rendered feeble and tiresome with too much repetition and whining. It arises from the greater facility with which we enter into the distresses of people, more upon a level with ourselves; and whose sorrows are expressed in less studied and unnatural language.

all know from our own experience in real life, that, in certain situations, and under certain circumstances, the stronger passions are fitted to produce scenes more exquisitely comic than any other: and one well-wrought scene of this kind will have a more powerful effect in repressing similar intemperance in the mind of a spectator, than many moral cautions, or even, perhaps, than the terrific examples of tragedy. There are to be found, no doubt, in the works of our best dramatic writers, comic scenes descriptive of the stronger passions, but it is generally the inferior characters of the piece who are made the subjects of them, very rarely those in whom we are much interested; and consequently the useful effect of such scenes upon the mind is very much weakened. This general appropriation of them has tempted our less skilful Dramatists to exaggerate, and step, in further quest of the ludicrous, so much beyond the bounds of nature, that the very effect they are so anxious to produce is thereby destroyed, and all useful application of it entirely cut off; for we never apply to ourselves a false representation of nature.

*But a complete exhibition of passion, with its varieties and progress in the breast of man, has, I believe, scarcely ever been attempted in comedy. Even love, though the chief subject of almost every play, has been pourtrayed in a loose, scattered, and imperfect manner. The story of the lovers is acted over before us, whilst the characteristics of that passion by which they are actuated, and which is the great master-spring of the whole, are faintly to be discovered. We are generally introduced to a lover after he has long been acquainted with his mistress, and wants but the consent of some stubborn relation, relief from some embarrassment of situation, or the clearing up some mistake or love quarrel occasioned by malice or accident, to make him completely happy. To overcome these difficulties, he is engaged in a busy train of contrivance and exertion, in which the spirit, activity, and ingenuity of the man is held forth to view, whilst the lover, comparatively speaking, is kept out of sight. But even when this is not the case; when the lover is not so busied and involved, this stage of the passion is exactly the one that is least interesting, and least instructive: not to mention, as I have done already, that one stage of any passion must show it imperfectly.

From this view of the Comic Drama, I have been induced to believe, that, as companions to the forementioned tragedies, a series of comedies on a similar plan, in which bustle of plot, brilliancy of dialogue, and even the bold and striking in character, should, to the best of the author's judgment, be kept in due subordination to nature, might likewise be acceptable to the public. I am confident that comedy upon this plan is capable of being made as interesting, as entertaining, and superior in moral tendency to any other. For even in ordinary life, with very slight cause to excite them, strong passions will foster themselves within the breast; and what are all the evils which vanity, folly, prejudice, or peculiarity of temper lead to, compared with those which such unquiet inmates produce? Were they confined to the exalted and the mighty, to those engaged in the great events of the world, to the inhabitants of palaces and camps, how happy, comparatively, would this world be! But many a miserable being, whom firm principle, timidity of character, or the fear of shame keeps back from the actual commission of crimes, is tormented in obscurity, under the dominion of those passions which place the seducer in ambush, rouse the bold spoiler to wrong, and strengthen the arm of the murderer. Though to those with whom such dangerous enemies have long found shelter, exposing them in an absurd and ridiculous light, may be shooting a finely-pointed arrow against the hardened rock; yet to those with whom they are but new, and less assured guests, this may prove a more successful mode of attack than any other.

It was the saying of a sagacious Scotchman, "Let who will make the laws of a nation, if I have the writing of its ballads." Something similar to this may be said in regard to the Drama. Its lessons reach not, indeed, to the lowest classes of the labouring people, who are the broad foundation of society, which can never be generally moved without endangering every thing that is constructed upon it, and who are our potent and formidable ballad-readers; but they reach to the classes next in order to them, and who will always have over them no inconsiderable influence. The impressions made by it are communicated, at the same instant of time, to a greater number of individuals than those made by any other species of writing; and they are strengthened in every spectator, by observing their effects upon those who surround him. From this observation, the mind of my reader will suggest of itself what it would be unnecessary, and, perhaps, improper in me here to enlarge upon The theatre is a school in which much good or evil may be learned. At the beginning of its career, the Drama was employed to mislead and excite; and, were I not unwilling to refer to transactions of the present times, I might abundantly confirm what I have said by recent examples. The author, therefore, who aims in any degree to improve the mode of its instruction, and point to more useful lessons than it is generally employed to dispense, is certainly praiseworthy, though want of abilities may unhappily prevent him from being successful in his efforts.

This idea has prompted me to begin a work in which I am aware of many difficulties, In plays of this nature the passions must be depicted not only with their bold and prominent features, but also with those minute and delicate traits which distinguish them in an infant, growing and repressed state; which are the most difficult of all to counterfeit, and one of which, falsely imagined, will destroy the effect of a whole scene. The characters over whom they are made to usurp

dominion must be powerful and interesting, exercising them with their full measure of opposition and struggle; for the chief antagonists they contend with must be the other passions and propensities of the heart, not outward circumstances and events. Though belonging to such characters, they must still be held to view in the most baleful and unseductive light; and those qualities in the impassioned which are necessary to interest us in their fate, must not be allowed, by any lustre borrowed from them, to diminish our abhorrence of guilt. The second, and even the inferior persons of each play, as they must be kept perfectly distinct from the great impassioned one, should generally be represented in a calm unagitated state, and therefore more pains are necessary then in other dramatic works to mark them by appropriate distinctions of character, lest they should appear altogether insipid and insignificant. As the great object here is to trace passion through all its varieties, and in every stage, many of which are marked by shades so delicate, that in much bustle of events they would be little attended to, or entirely overlooked, simplicity of plot is more necessary than in those plays where only occasional bursts of passion are introduced, to distinguish a character, or animate a scene. But where simplicity of plot is necessary, there is very great danger of making a piece appear bare and unvaried, and nothing but great force and truth in the delineations of nature will prevent it from being tiresome.* Soliloquy, or those overflowings of the perturbed soul, in which it unburthens itself of those thoughts which it cannot communicate to others, and which in certain situations is the only mode that a Dramatist can employ to open to us the mind he would display, must necessarily be often, and to considerable length, introduced. Here, indeed, as it naturally belong to passion, it will not be so offensive as it generally is in other plays, when a calm unagitated person tells over to himself all that has befallen him, and all his future schemes of intrigue or advancement; yet to make speeches of this kind sufficiently natural and impressive to excite no degree of weariness nor distaste, will be found to be no easy task. There are, besides these, many other difficulties belonging peculiarly to this undertaking, too minute and tedious to mention. If, fully aware of them, I have not shrunk back from the attempt, it is not from any idea that my own powers or discernment will at all times enable me to overcome them; but I am emboldened by the confidence I feel in that candour and indulgence, with which the good and enlightened do ever regard the experimental efforts of those who wish in any degree to enlarge the sources of pleasure and instruction amongst men.

It will now be proper to say something of the particular plays which compose this volume. But in the first place, I must observe, that as I pretend not to have overcome the difficulties attached to this design; so neither from the errors and defects, which, in these pages, I have thought it necessary to point out in the works of others, do I at all pretend to be blameless. To conceive the great moral object and outline of the story; to people it with various characters, under the influence of various passions; and to strike out circumstances and situations calculated to call them into action, is a very different employment of the mind from calmly considering those propensities of our nature, to which dramatic writings are most powerfully addressed, and taking a general view upon those principles of the works of preceding authors. They are employments which cannot well occupy it at the same time; and experience has taught us, that critics do not unfrequently write in contradiction to their own rules. If I should, therefore, sometimes appear, in the foregoing remarks, to have provided a stick wherewith to break my own pate, I entreat that my reader will believe I am neither confident nor boastful, and use it with gentleness.

In the first two plays, where love is the passion under review, their relation to the general plan may not be very obvious. Love is the chief ground-work of almost all our tragedies and comedies, and so far they are not distinguished from others. But I have endeavored in both to give an unbroken view of the passion from its beginning, and to mark it as I went along, with those peculiar traits which distinguish its different stages of progression. I have in both these pieces grafted this passion, not on those open, communicative, impetuous characters, who have so long occupied the dramatic station of lovers, but on men of a firm, thoughtful, reserved turn of mind, with whom it commonly makes the longest stay, and maintains the hardest struggle. I should be extremely sorry if, from any thing at the conclusion of

*To make up for this simplicity of plot, the show and decorations of the theatre ought to be allowed to plays written upon this plan, in their full extent. How fastidious soever some poets may be in regard to these matters, it is much better to relieve our tired-out attention with a battle, a banquet, or a procession, than an accumulation of incidents. In the latter case the mind is harassed and confused with those doubts, conjectures, and disappointments which multiplied events occasion, and in a great measure unfitted for attending to the worthier parts of the piece: but in the former it enjoys a rest a pleasing pause in its more serious occupation from which it can return again, without any incumbrance of foreign intruding ideas. The show of a splendid procession will afford to a person of the best understanding, a pleasure in kind, though not in degree, with that which a child would receive from it; but when it is past he thinks no more of it; whereas some confusion of circumstances, some half-explained mistake, which gives him no pleasure at all when it takes place, may take his attention afterwards from the refined beauties of a natural and characteristic dialogue.

the tragedy, it should be supposed that I mean to countenance suicide, or condemn those customs whose object is the discouragement of it, by withholding from the body of the self-slain those sacred rites and marks of respect commonly shown to the dead. Let it be considered, that whatever I have inserted there, which can at all raise any suspicion of this kind, is put into the mouths of rude uncultivated soldiers, who are roused with the loss of a beloved leader, and indignant at any idea of disgrace being attached to him. If it should seem inconsistent with the nature of this work, that in its companion, the comedy, I have made strong moral principle triumph over love, let it be remembered, that, without this, the whole moral tendency of a play, which must end happily, would have been destroyed; and that it is not my intention to encourage the indulgence of this passion, amiable as it is, but to restrain it. The last play, the subject of which is hatred, will more clearly discover the nature and intention of my design. The rise and progress of this passion I have been obliged to give in retrospect, instead of representing it along in its actual operation, as I could have wished to have done. But hatred is a passion of slow growth; and to have exhibited it from its beginnings would have included a longer period, than even those who are least scrupulous about the limitation of dramatic time would have thought allowable. I could not have introduced my chief characters upon the stage as boys, and then as men. For this passion must be kept distinct from that dislike which we conceive for another when he has greatly offended us, and which is almost the constant companion of anger; and also from that eager desire to crush, and inflict suffering on him who has injured us, which constitutes revenge. This passion, as I have conceived it, is that rooted and settled aversion, which from opposition of character, aided by circumstances of little importance, grows at last into such antipathy and personal disgust as makes him who entertains it, feel, in the presence of him who is the object of it, a degree of torment and restlessness which is insufferable. It is a passion, I believe, less frequent than any other of the stronger passions, but in the breast where it does exist, it creates, perhaps, more misery than any other. To endeavor to interest the mind for a man under the dominion of a passion so baleful, so unamiable, may seem, perhaps, reprehensible. I therefore beg it may be considered, that it is the passion and not the man which is held up to our execration; and that this and every other bad passion does more strongly evince its pernicious and dangerous nature, when we see it thus counteracting and destroying the good gifts of Heaven, than when it is represented as the suitable associate, in the breast of inmates as dark as itself. This remark will likewise be applicable to many of the other plays belonging to my work, that are intended to follow. A decidedly wicked character can never be interesting; and to employ such for the display of any strong passion would very much injure, instead of improving, the moral effect. In the breast of a bad man passion has comparatively little to combat; how then can it show its strength? I shall say no more upon this subject, but submit myself to the judgment of my reader.

It may, perhaps, be supposed, from my publishing these plays, that I have written them for the closet rather than the stage. If, upon perusing them with attention, the reader is disposed to think they are better calculated for the first than the last, let him impute it to want of skill in the author, and not to any previous design. A play but of small poetical merit, that is suited to strike and interest the spectator, to catch the attention of him who will not, and of him who cannot read, is a more valuable and useful production than one whose elegant and harmonious pages are admired in the libraries of the tasteful and refined. To have received approbation from an audience of my countrymen, would have been more pleasing to me than any other praise. A few tears from the simple and young would have been, in my eyes, pearls of great price; and the spontaneous, untutored plaudits of the rude and uncultivated would have come to my heart as offerings of no mean value. I should, therefore, have been better pleased to have introduced them to the world from the stage than from the press. I possess, however, no likely channel to the former mode of public introduction: and, upon further reflection, it appeared to me, that by publishing them in this way, I have an opportunity afforded me of explaining the design of my work, and enabling the public to judge, not only of each play by itself, but as making a part likewise of the whole; an advantage which, perhaps, does more than overbalance the splendor and effect of theatrical representation.

It may be thought, that with this extensive plan before me, I should not have been in a hurry to publish, but have waited to give a larger portion of it to the public, which would have enabled them to make a truer estimate of its merit. To bring forth only three plays of the whole, and the last without its intended companion, may seem like the haste of those vain people, who, as soon as they have written a few pages of a discourse, or a few couplets of a poem, cannot be easy till every body has seen them. I do protest, in honest simplicity! it is distrust and not confidence, that has led me, at this early stage of the undertaking, to bring it before the public. To labour in uncertainty is at all times unpleasant: but to proceed in a long and difficult work with any impression upon your mind that your labour may be in vain; that the opinion you have conceived of your ability to perform it may be a delusion, a false suggestion of self-love, the fantasy of an aspiring temper, is most discouraging and cheerless. I have not proceeded so far, indeed, merely upon the strength of my own judgment; but the

friends to whom I have shown my manuscripts are partial to me, and their approbation, which in the case of any indifferent person, would be in my mind completely decisive, goes but a little way in relieving me from these apprehensions. To step beyond the circle of my own immediate friends in quest of opinion, from the particular temper of my mind, I feel an uncommon repugnance; I can with less pain to myself bring them before the public at once, and submit to its decision.* It is to my countrymen at large I call for assistance. If this work is fortunate enough to attract their attention, let their strictures as well as their praise come to my aid: the one will encourage me in a long and arduous undertaking, the other will teach me to improve it as I advance. For there are many errours that may be detected, and improvements that may be suggested in the prosecution of this work, which, from the observations of a great variety of readers, are more likely to be pointed out to me, than from those of a small number of persons, even of the best judgment. I am not possessed of that confidence in mine own powers, which enables the concealed genius, under the pressure of present discouragement, to pursue his labors in security, looking firmly forward to other more enlighted times for his reward. If my own countrymen with whom I live and converse, who look upon the same race of men, the same state of society, the same passing events with myself, receive not my offering, I presume not to look to posterity.

Before I close this discourse, let me crave the forbearance of my reader, if he has discovered in the course of it any unacknowledged use of the thoughts of other authors, which he thinks ought to have been noticed; and let me beg the same favour, if in reading the following plays, any similar neglect seems to occur. There are few writers who have sufficient originality of thought to strike out for themselves new ideas upon every occasion. When a thought presents itself to me, as suited to the purpose I am aiming at, I would neither be thought proud enough to reject it, on finding that another has used it before me, nor mean enough to make use of it without acknowledging the obligation, when I can at all guess to whom such acknowledgments are due. But I am situated where I have no library to consult; my reading through the whole of my life has been of a loose, scattered, unmethodical kind, with no determined direction, and I have not been blessed by nature with the advantages of a retentive or accurate memory. Do not, however, imagine from this, I at all wish to insinuate that I ought to be acquitted of every obligation to preceding authors; and that when a palpable similarity of thought and expression is observable between us, it is a similarity produced by accident alone, and with perfect unconsciousness on my part. I am frequently sensible, from the manner in which an idea arises to my imagination, and the readiness with which words, also, present themselves to clothe it in, that I am only making use of some dormant part of that hoard of ideas which the most indifferent memories lay up, and not the native suggestions of mine own mind. Whenever I have suspected myself of doing so, in the course of this work, I have felt a strong inclination to mark that suspicion in a note. But, besides that it might have appeared like an affectation of scrupulousness which I would avoid, there being likewise, most assuredly, many other places in it where I have done the same thing without being conscious of it, a suspicion of wishing to slur them over, and claim all the rest as unreservedly my own, would unavoidably have attached to me. If this volume should appear, to any candid and liberal critic, to merit that he should take the trouble of pointing out to me in what parts of it I seem to have made that use of other authors' writings, which, according to the fair laws of literature, ought to have been acknowledged, I shall think myself obliged to him. I shall examine the sources he points out as having supplied my own lack of ideas; and if this book should have the good fortune to go through a second edition, I shall not fail to own my obligations to him, and the authors from whom I may have borrowed.

How little credit soever, upon perusing these plays, the reader may think me entitled to in regard to the execution of the work, he will not, I flatter myself, deny me some credit in regard to the plan. I know of no series of plays, in any language, expressly descriptive of the different passions; and I believe there are few plays existing, in which the display of one strong passion is the chief business of the drama, so written that they could properly make part of such a series. I do not think that we should, from the works of various authors, be able to make a collection which would give us any thing exactly of the nature of that which is here proposed. If the reader, in perusing it, perceives that the abilities of the author are not proportioned to the task which is imposed upon them, he will wish, in the spirit of kindness rather than of censure, as I most sincerely do, that they had been more adequate to it. However, if I perform it ill, I am still confident that this (pardon me if I call it so) noble design will not be suffered to fall to the ground: some one will arise after me who will do it justice; and there is no poet, possessing genius for such a work, who will not at the same time

* The first of these plays, indeed, has been shown to two or three Gentlemen whom I have not the honor of reckoning amongst my friends. One of them, who is a man of distinguished talents, has honored it with very flattering approbation; and, at his suggestion, one or two slight alterations in it have been made.

possess that spirit of justice and of candour, which will lead him to remember me with respect.

I have now only to thank my reader, whoever he may be, who has followed me through the pages of this discourse, for having had the patience to do so. May he, in going through what follows (a wish the sincerity of which he cannot doubt,) find more to reward his trouble than I dare venture to promise him; and for the pains he has already taken, and those which he intends to take for me, I request that he will accept of my grateful acknowledgements.

Note.—Shakspeare, more than any of our poets, gives peculiar and appropriate distinction to the character of his tragedies. The remarks I have made, in regard to the little variety of character to be met with in tragedy, apply not to him. Neither has he, as other Dramatists generally do, bestowed pains on the chief persons of his drama only, leaving the second and inferiour ones insignificant and spiritless. He never wears out our capacity to feel, by eternally pressing upon it. His tragedies are agreeably checquered with variety of scenes, enriched with good sense, nature, and vivacity, which relieve our minds from the fatigue of continued distress. If he sometimes carries this so far as to break in upon that serious tone of mind, which disposes us to listen with effect to the higher scenes of tragedy, he has done so chiefly in his historical plays, where the distresses set forth are commonly of that public kind, which does not, at any rate, make much impression upon the feelings.

ADVERTISEMENT.

The plays contained in this volume were all laid by for, at least, one year, before they were copied out to prepare them for the press; I have therefore had the advantage of reading them over, when they were in some measure effaced from my memory, and judging of them in some degree like an indifferent person. The Introduction has not had the same advantage; it was copied out for the press immediately after I had finished it, and I have not had courage to open the book, or read any part of it, till it was put into my hands to be corrected for the third edition. Upon reading it over again, it appears to me that a tone of censure and decision is too often discoverable in it, which I have certainly no title to assume. It was, perhaps, difficult to avoid this fault, and at the same time completely to give the view I desired of my motives and plan in this work; but I sincerely wish that I had been skilful enough to have accomplished it without falling into this errour. Though I have escaped, as far as I know, all censure on this account, yet I wish the Publick to be assured, that I am both sensible of, and grateful for, their forbearance.

BASIL: A TRAGEDY.

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

MEN.

COUNT BASIL,	*a General in the Emperour's service.*
COUNT ROSINBERG,	*his Friend.*
DUKE OF MANTUA.	
GAURICEIO,	*his Minister.*
VALTOMER, FREDERICK,	*Two Officers of* Basil's *Troops.*
GEOFFRY,	*an old Soldier very much maimed in the wars.*
MIRANDO,	*a little Boy, favourite to* Victoria.

WOMEN.

VICTORIA,	*Daughter to the Duke of* Mantua.
COUNTESS OF ALBINI,	*Friend and Governess to* Victoria.
ISABELLA,	*a Lady attending upon* Victoria.

Officers, Soldiers, *and* Attendants, Masks, Dancers, *&c.*

⁂ *The Scene is in* Mantua, *and its environs. Time supposed to be the Sixteenth Century, when* CHARLES *the Fifth defeated* FRANCIS *the First, at the battle of* Pavia.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—AN OPEN STREET, CROWDED WITH PEOPLE WHO SEEM TO BE WAITING IN EXPECTATION OF SOME SHOW.

Enter a CITIZEN.

First Man. Well, friend, what tidings of the grand procession?
Cit. I left it passing by the northern gate.
Second Man. I've waited long, I'm glad it comes at last.
Young Man. And does the Princess look so wondrous fair
As fame reports?
Cit. She is the fairest lady of the train,—
Yet all the fairest beauties of the court
Are in her train.
Old Man. Bears she such off'rings to Saint Francis' shrine,
So rich, so marvellous rich, as rumour says?
—'Twill drain the treasury!
Cit. Since she, in all this splendid pomp, returns
Her publick thanks to the good patron Saint,
Who from his sick bed hath restor'd her father,
Thou wouldst not have her go with empty hands?
She loves magnificence—
(*Discovering amongst the crowd Old* Geoffry.)
Ha! art thou here, old remnant of the wars?
Thou art not come to see this courtly show,
Which sets the young agape?
Geof. I come not for the show; and yet methinks,
It were a better jest upon me still,
If thou didst truly know mine errand here.
Cit. I pri'thee say.
Geof. What, must I tell it thee?
As o'er my evening fire I musing sat,
Some few days since, my mind's eye backward turn'd
Upon the various changes I have pass'd—
How in my youth, with gay attire allur'd,
And all the grand accoutrements of war,
I left my peaceful home: Then my first battles,
When clashing arms, and sights of blood were new:
Then all the after chances of the war:
Ay, and that field, a well-fought field it was,
When with an arm (I speak not of it oft)
Which now (*pointing to his empty sleeve*) thou seest is no arm of mine,
In a straight pass I stopp'd a thousand foes,
And turn'd my flying comrades to the charge;
For which good service, in his tented court,
My prince bestow'd a mark of favour on me;
Whilst his fair consort, seated by his side,
The fairest lady e'er mine eyes beheld,
Gave me what more than all besides I priz'd—
Methinks I see her still—a gracious smile—
'T was a heart-kindling smile,—a smile of praise—
Well, musing thus on all my fortunes past,
A neighbour drew the latchet of my door,
And full of news from town, in many words
Big with rich names, told of this grand procession;
E'en as he spoke a fancy seiz'd my soul
To see the princess pass, if in her looks
I yet might trace some semblance of her mother.
This is the simple truth; laugh as thou wilt.
I came not for the show.

Enter an OFFICER.

Officer to Geof. Make way that the procession may have room:
Stand you aside, and let this man have place.
(*Pushing* Geof. *and endeavouring to put another in his place.*)
Geof. But that thou art the prince's officer,
I'd give thee back thy push with better blows.

Officer. What, wilt thou not give place? the prince is near:
I will complain to him, and have thee caged.

Geof. Yes, do complain, I pray; and when thou dost,
Say that the private of the tenth brigade,
Who sav'd his army on the Danube's bank,
And since that time a private hath remained,
Dares, as a citizen, his right maintain
Against thy insolence. Go tell him this,
And ask him then what dungeon of his tower
He'll have me thrust into.

Cit. to Officer. This is old Geoffry of the tenth brigade.

Offi. I knew him not: you should have told me sooner. [EXIT, *looking much ashamed*.

Martial Musick heard at a distance.

Cit. Hark, this is musick of a warlike kind.

Enter Second CITIZEN.

To Sec. Cit. What sounds are these, good friend, which this way bear?

Sec. Cit. The brave Count Basil is upon his march,
To join the Emp'ror with some chosen troops,
And as an ally doth through Mantua pass.

Geof. I' ve heard a good report of this young soldier.

Sec. Cit. 'Tis said he disciplines his men severely,
And over-much the old commander is,
Which seems ungracious in so young a man.

Geof. I know he loves not ease and revelry;
He makes them soldiers at no dearer rate
Than he himself hath paid. What, dost thou think,
That e'en the very meanest simple craft,
Cannot without due diligence be learn'd,
And yet the noble art of soldiership
May be attain'd by loit'ring in the sun?
Some men are born to feast, and not to fight;
Whose sluggish minds, e'en in fair honour's field,
Still on their dinner turn—
Let such pot-boiling varlets stay at home,
And wield a flesh-hook rather than a sword.
In times of easy service, true it is,
An easy careless chief all soldiers love;
But O! how gladly in the day of battle
Would they their jolly bottle-chief desert,
And follow such a leader as Count Basil?
So gath'ring herds, at pressing danger's call,
Confess the master deer.

(*Musick is heard again, and nearer*. Geoffry *walks up and down with a military triumphant step*.

Cit. What moves thee thus?

Geof. I've march'd to this same tune in glorious days.
My very limbs catch motion from the sound,
As they were young again.

Sec. Cit. But here they come.

Enter Count BASIL, Officers and Soldiers in Procession, with Colours flying, and martial musick. When they have marched half-way over the Stage, an Officer of the Duke's enters from the opposite side, and speaks to BASIL, upon which he gives a sign with his hand, and the martial musick ceases; soft musick is heard at a little distance and VICTORIA, with a long procession of Ladies, enters from the opposite side. General, &c. pay obeisance to her, as she passes; she stops to return it, and then goes off with her train. After which the military procession moves on, and Exeunt.

Cit. to Geof. What think'st thou of the princess?

Geof. She is fair,
But not so fair as her good mother was. [EXEUNT.

SCENE II.—A PUBLIC WALK ON THE RAMPARTS OF THE TOWN.

Enter COUNT ROSINBERG, VALTOMER, and FREDERICK.—VALTOMER enters by the opposite side of the Stage, and meets them.

Valt. O what a jolly town for way-worn soldiers!
Rich steaming pots, and smell of dainty fare,
From every house salutes you as you pass:
Light feats and juggler's tricks attract the eye;
Musick and merriment in ev'ry street;
Whilst pretty damsels, in their best attire,
Trip on in wanton groups, then look behind,
To spy the fools a-gazing after them.

Fred. But short will be the season of our ease,
For Basil is of flinty matter made,
And cannot be allur'd—
'Faith, Rosinberg, I would thou didst command us.
Thou art his kinsman, of a rank as noble,
Some years his elder too—How has it been
That he should be preferr'd? I see not why.

Ros. Ah! but I see it, and allow it well;
He is too much my pride to wake my envy.

Fred. Nay, Count, it is thy foolish admiration
Which raises him to such superiour height;
And truly thou hast so infected us,
That I at times have felt me aw'd before him,
I knew not why. 'T is cursed folly this.
Thou art as brave, of as good parts as he.

Ros. Our talents of a diff'rent nature are;
Mine for the daily intercourse of life,
And his for higher things.

Fred. Well, praise him as thou wilt; I see it not;
I'm sure I am as brave a man as he.

Ros. Yes, brave thou art, but 'tis subaltern brav'ry,
And doth respect thyself. Thou'lt bleed as well,
Give and receive as deep a wound as he.
When Basil fights he wields a thousand swords;
For 'tis their trust in his unshaken mind,
O'erwatching all the changes of the field,
Calm and inventive 'midst the battle's storm,
Which makes his soldiers bold.—
There have been those, in early manhood slain,
Whose great heroick souls have yet inspir'd
With such a noble zeal their gen'rous troops,

That to their latest day of bearing arms,
Their grey-hair'd soldiers have all dangers brav'd
Of desp'rate service, claim'd with boastful pride,
As those who fought beneath them in their youth.
Such men have been; of whom it may be said,
Their spirits conquer'd when their clay was cold.

Valt. Yes, I have seen in the eventful field,
When new occasion mock'd all rules of art,
E'en old commanders hold experience cheap,
And look to Basil ere his chin was dark.

Ros. One fault he has; I know but only one;
His too great love of military fame
Absorbs his thoughts, and makes him oft appear
Unsocial and severe.

Fred. Well, feel I not undaunted in the field?
As much enthusiastic love of glory?
Why am I not as good a man as he?

Ros. He's form'd for great occasions, thou for small.

Valt. But small occasions in the path of life
Lie thickly sown, while great are rarely scatter'd.

Ros. By which you would infer that men like Fred'rick
Should on the whole a better figure make,
Than men of higher parts. It is not so;
For some shew well, and fair applauses gain,
Where want of skill in other men is graceful.
Pray do not frown, good Fred'rick, no offence:
Thou canst not make a great man of thyself;
Yet wisely deign to use thy native pow'rs,
And prove an honor'd courtly gentleman.
But hush! no more of this; here Basil comes.

Enter Basil, who returns their salute without speaking.

Ros. What think'st thou, Valtomer, of Mantua's princess?

Valt. Fame prais'd her much, but hath not prais'd her more
Than on a better proof the eye consents to.
With all that grace and nobleness of mien,
She might do honor to an emp'rour's throne;
She is too noble for a petty court.
Is it not so, my Lord?—(*To* Basil, *who only bows assent.*)
Nay, she demeans herself with so much grace,
Such easy state, such gay magnificence,
She should be queen of revelry and show.

Fred. She's charming as the goddess of delight.

Valt. But after her, she most attracted me
Who wore the yellow scarf and walk'd the last;
For tho' Victoria is a lovely woman—

Fred. Nay, it is treason but to call her woman;
She's a divinity, and should be worshipp'd.
But on my life, since now we talk of worship.
She worshipp'd Francis with right noble gifts!
They sparkled so with gold and precious gems—
Their value must be great; some thousand crowns.

Ros. I would not rate them at a price so mean;
The cup alone, with precious stones beset,
Would fetch a sum as great. That olive-branch
The princess bore herself, of fretted gold,
Was exquisitely wrought. I mark'd it more,
Because she held it in so white a hand.

Bas. (*in a quick voice.*) Mark'd you her hand? I did not see her hand.
And yet she wav'd it twice.

Ros. It is a fair one, tho' you mark'd it not.

Valt. I wish some painter's eye had view'd the group,
As she and all her lovely damsels pass'd;
He would have found wherewith t'enrich his art.

Ros. I wish so too; for oft their fancied beauties
Have so much cold perfection in their parts,
'Tis plain they ne'er belong'd to flesh and blood.
This is not truth, and doth not please so well
As the varieties of lib'ral nature,
Where ev'ry kind of beauty charms the eye;
Large and small featur'd, flat and prominent,
Ay, by the mass! and snub-nos'd beauties too.
'Faith, ev'ry woman hath some witching charm,
If that she be not proud, or captious.

Valt. Demure, or over-wise, or giv'n to freaks.

Ros. Or giv'n to freaks! hold, hold, good Valtomer!
Thou'lt leave no woman handsome under heav'n.

Valt. But I must leave you for an hour or so;
I mean to view the town.

Fred. I'll go with thee.

Ros. And so will I.

[Exeunt *Valt. Fred. and Ros.*

Re-enter Rosinberg.

Ros. I have repented me, I will not go;
They will be too long absent.—(*Pauses, and looks at* Basil, *who remains still musing without seeing him.*)
What mighty thoughts engage my pensive friend?

Bas. O it is admirable!

Ros. How runs thy fancy? what is admirable?

Bas. Her form, her face, her motion, ev'ry thing?

Ros. The princess; yes, have we not prais'd her much?

Bas. I know you prais'd her, and her off'rings too!
She might have giv'n the treasures of the east,

Ere I had known it.
O! didst thou mark her when she first appear'd?
Still distant, slowly moving with her train;
Her robe and tresses floating on the wind,
Like some light figure in a morning cloud?
Then, as she onward to the eye became
The more distinct, how lovelier still she grew!
That graceful bearing of her slender form;
Her roundly-spreading breast, her tow'ring neck,
Her face ting'd sweetly with the bloom of youth—
But when approaching near, she tow'rds us turn'd,
Kind mercy! what a countenance was there!
And when to our salute she gently bow'd,
Didst mark that smile rise from her parting lips?
Soft swell'd her glowing cheek, her eyes smil'd too:
O how they smil'd! 'twas like the beams of heav'n!
I felt my roused soul within me start,
Like something wak'd from sleep.

Ros. The beams of heav'n do many slumb'rers wake
To care and misery!

Bas. There's something grave and solemn in your voice
As you pronounce these words. What dost thou mean?
Thou wouldst not sound my knell?

Ros. No, not for all beneath the vaulted sky!
But to be plain, thus warmly from your lips,
Her praise displeases me. To men like you,
If love should come, he proves no easy guest.

Bas. What, dost thou think I am beside myself,
And cannot view the fairness of perfection
With that delight which lovely beauty gives,
Without tormenting me with fruitless wishes,
Like the poor child who sees its brighten'd face,
And whimpers for the moon? Thou art not serious.
From early youth, war has my mistress been,
And though a rugged one, I'll constant prove,
And not forsake her now. There may be joys
Which, to the strange o'erwhelming of the soul,
Visit the lover's breast beyond all others;
E'en now, how dearly do I feel there may!
But what of them? they are not made for me—
The hasty flashes of contending steel
Must serve instead of glances from my love,
And for soft breathing sighs the cannon's roar.

Ros. (taking his hand.) Now I am satisfied. Forgive me, Basil.

Bas. I'm glad thou art; we'll talk of her no more;
Why should I vex my friend?

Ros. Thou hast not issued orders for the march.

Bas. I'll do it soon; thou need'st not be afraid.
To-morrow's sun shall bear us far from hence,
Never perhaps to pass these gates again.

Ros. With last night's close, did you not curse this town
That would one single day your troops retard?
And now, methinks, you talk of leaving it,
As though it were the place that gave you birth;
As though you had around these strangers' walls
Your infant gambols play'd.

Bas. The sight of what may be but little priz'd,
Doth cause a solemn sadness in the mind,
When view'd as that we ne'er shall see again.

Ros. No, not a whit to wand'ring men like us.
No, not a whit! What custom hath endear'd
We part with sadly, though we prize it not:
But what is new some powerful charm must own,
Thus to affect the mind.

Bas. (hastily.) We'll let it pass—It hath no consequence:
Thou art impatient.

Ros. I'm not impatient. 'Faith, I only wish
Some other rout our destin'd march had been,
That still thou mightst thy glorious course pursue
With an untroubled mind.

Bas. O! wish it, wish it not! bless'd be that rout!
What we have seen to-day, I must remember—
I should be brutish if I could forget it.
Oft in the watchful post, or weary march,
Oft in the nightly silence of my tent,
My fixed mind shall gaze upon it still;
But it will pass before my fancy's eye,
Like some delightful vision of the soul,
To soothe, not trouble it.

Ros. What! 'midst the dangers of eventful war,
Still let thy mind be haunted by a woman?
Who would, perhaps, hear of thy fall in battle,
As Dutchmen read of earthquakes in Calabria,
And never stop to cry 'alack-a-day!'
For me there is but one of all the sex,
Who still shall hold her station in my breast,
'Midst all the changes of inconstant fortune;
Because I'm passing sure she loves me well,
And for my sake a sleepless pillow finds
When rumour tells bad tidings of the war;
Because I know her love will never change,
Nor make me prove uneasy jealousy.

Bas. Happy art thou! who is this wondrous woman?

Ros. It is mine own good mother, faith and truth!

Bas. (smiling.) Give me thy hand; I love her dearly too.
Rivals we are not, though our love is one.

Ros. And yet I might be jealous of her love,
For she bestows too much of it on thee,

Who hast no claim but to a nephew's share.
Bas. (*going.*) I'll meet thee some time hence. I must to Court.
Ros. A private conf'rence will not stay thee long.
I'll wait thy coming near the palace gate.
Bas. 'Tis to the public court I mean to go.
Ros. I thought you had determin'd otherwise.
Bas. Yes, but on farther thought it did appear
As though it would be failing in respect
At such a time—That look doth wrong me, Rosinberg!
For on my life, I had determin'd thus,
Ere I beheld—before we enter'd Mantua.
But wilt thou change that soldier's dusty garb,
And go with me thyself?
Ros. Yes, I will go.
(*As they are going* Ros. *stops, and looks at* Basil.)
Bas. Why dost thou stop?
Ros. 'Tis for my wonted caution,
Which first thou gav'st me—I shall ne'er forget it!
'Twas at Vienna, on a public day;
Thou but a youth, I then a man full form'd;
Thy stripling's brow grac'd with its first cockade,
Thy mighty bosom swell'd with mighty thoughts.
"Thou'rt for the court, dear Rosinberg," quoth thou!
"Now pray thee be not caught with some gay dame.
To laugh and ogle, and befool thyself:
It is offensive in the public eye,
And suits not with a man of thy endowments."
So said your serious lordship to me then,
And have on like occasions, often since,
In other terms repeated.—
But I must go to-day without my caution.
Bas. Nay, Rosinberg, I am impatient now:
Did I not say we'd talk of her no more?
Ros. Well, my good friend, God grant we keep our word!
[Exeunt.

End of the First Act.

Note.—My first idea when I wrote this play, was to represent Basil as having seen Victoria for the first time in the procession, that I might shew more perfectly the passion from its first beginning, and also its sudden power over the mind; but I was induced from the criticism of one, whose judgment I very much respect, to alter it, and represent him as having formerly seen and loved her. The first Review that took notice of this work objected to Basil's having seen her before as a defect; and, as we are all easily determined to follow our own opinion, I have, upon after-consideration, given the play in this edition [*third*], as far as this is concerned, exactly in its original state. Strong internal evidence of this will be discovered by any one, who will take the trouble of reading attentively the second scenes of the first and second acts in the present and former editions of this book. Had Basil seen and loved Victoria before, his first speech, in which he describes her to Rosinberg as walking in the procession, would not be natural; and there are, I think, other little things besides, which will shew that the circumstance of his former meeting with her is an interpolation.

The blame of this, however, I take entirely upon myself: the Critick, whose opinion I have mentioned, judged of the piece entirely as an unconnected play, and knew nothing of the general plan of this work, which ought to have been communicated to him. Had it been, indeed, an unconnected play, and had I put this additional circumstance to it with proper judgment and skill, I am inclined to think it would have been an improvement.

ACT II.

SCENE I.—A ROOM OF STATE,

The Duke of Mantua, Basil, Rosinberg, and a number of Courtiers, Attendants, &c. The Duke and Basil appear talking together on the front of the Stage.

Duke. But our opinions differ widely there;
From the position of the rival armies,
I cannot think they'll join in battle soon.
Bas. I am indeed beholden to your highness,
But tho' unwillingly, we must depart.
The foes are near, the time is critical;
A soldier's reputation is too fine
To be expos'd e'en to the smallest cloud.
Duke. An untried soldier's is; but yours, my lord,
Nurs'd with the bloody showers of many a field,
And brightest sunshine of successful fortune,
A plant of such a hardy stem hath grown,
E'en Envy's sharpest blasts assail it not.
Yet after all, by the bless'd holy Cross!
I feel too warm an interest in the cause
To stay your progress here a single hour,
Did I not know your soldiers are fatigu'd,
And two days' rest would much recruit their strength.
Bas. Your highness will be pleas'd to pardon me;
My troops are not o'ermarch'd, and one day's rest
Is all our needs require.
Duke. Ah! hadst thou come
Unfetter'd with the duties of command,
I then had well retain'd thee for my guest,
With claims too strong, too sacred for denial.
Thy noble sire my fellow-soldier was;
Together many a rough campaign we serv'd;
I lov'd him well, and much it pleases me
A son of his beneath my roof to see.
Bas. Were I indeed free master of myself,
Strong inclination would detain me here;
No other tie were wanting.
These gracious tokens of your princely favour
I'll treasure with my best remembrances;
For he who shows them for my father's sake,

Does something sacred in his kindness bear,
As tho' he shed a blessing on my head.

Duke. Well, bear my greetings to the brave Piscaro,
And say how warmly I embrace the cause.
Your third day's march will to his presence bring
Your valiant troops: said you not so, my lord?

Enter VICTORIA, the COUNTESS of ALBINI, ISABELLA, and Ladys.

Bas. (*who changes countenance upon seeing them.*)
Yes, I believe—I think—I know not well—
Yes, please your grace, we march by break of day.

Duke. Nay, that I know. I asked you, noble Count,
When you expect th' Imperial force to join.

Bas. When it shall please your grace—I crave your pardon—
I somewhat have mistaken of your words.

Duke. You are not well; your color changes,
What is the matter?

Bas. A dizzy mist that swims before my sight—
A ringing in my ears—'tis strange enough—
'Tis slight—'tis nothing worth—'tis gone already.

Duke. I'm glad it is. Look to your friend, Count Rosinberg,
It may return again.—(*To* Rosinberg, *who stands at a little distance, looking earnestly at* Basil.—Duke *leaves them, and joins* Victoria's *party.*)

Ros. Good heavens, Basil, is it thus with thee!
Thy hand shakes too: (*taking his hand.*) Would we were far from hence!

Bas. I'm well again, thou need'st not be afraid.
'Tis like enough my frame is indispos'd
With some slight weakness from our weary march.
Nay, look not on me thus, it is unkindly—
I cannot bear thine eyes.

The DUKE, with VICTORIA and her Ladies, advance to the front of the Stage to BASIL.

Duke. Victoria, welcome here the brave Count Basil.
His kinsman too, the gallant Rosinberg.
May you, and these fair ladies so prevail,
Such gentle suitors cannot plead in vain,
To make them grace my court another day.
I shall not be offended when I see
Your power surpasses mine.

Vict. Our feeble efforts will presumptuous seem
Attempting that in which your highness fails.

Duke. There's honour in th' attempt; success attend ye.—(Duke *retires and mixes with the Courtiers at the bottom of the Stage.*)

Vict. I fear we incommode you, my Lord,
With the slow tedious length of our procession.
E'en as I pass'd, against my heart it went
To stop so long upon their weary way
Your tired troops.—

Bas. Ah! Madam, all too short!
Time never bears such moments on his wing,
But when he flies too swiftly to be mark'd.

Vict. Ah! surely then you make too good amends
By marking now his after-progress well.
To-day must seem a weary length to him
Who is so eager to be gone to-morrow.

Ros. They must not linger who would quit these walls;
For if they do, a thousand masked foes;
Some under show of rich luxurious feasts,
Gay, sprightly pastime, and high zested game;—
Nay, some, my gentle ladies, true it is,
The very worst and fellest of the crew,
In fair alluring shape of beauteous dames,
Do such a barrier form t' oppose their way
As few men may o'ercome.

Isab. From this last wicked foe should we infer
Yourself have suffer'd much?

Albin. No, Isabella, these are common words,
To please you with false notions of your pow'r.
So all men talk of ladies and of love.

Vict. 'Tis even so. If love a tyrant be,
How dare his humble chained votaries
To tell such rude and wicked tales of him?

Bas. Because they most of lover's ills complain,
Who but affect it as a courtly grace,
Whilst he who feels is silent.

Ros. But there you wrong me; I have felt it oft.
Oft has it made me sigh at ladies' feet,
Soft ditties sing, and dismal sonnets scrawl.

Albin. In all its strange effects, most worthy Rosinberg,
Has it e'er made thee in a corner sit,
Sad, longly, moping sit, and hold thy tongue?

Ros. No, 'faith, it never has.

Albin. Ha, ha, ha, ha! then thou hast never lov'd.

Ros. Nay, but I have, and felt love's bondage too.

Vict. Fye! it is pedantry to call it bondage!
Love-marring wisdom, reason full of bars,
Deserve, methinks, that appellation more.
Is it not so, my Lord?—(*To* Basil.)

Bas. O surely, Madam!
That is not bondage which the soul enthrall'd
So gladly bears, and quits not but with anguish.
Stern honour's laws, the fair report of men,
These are the fetters that enchain the mind,
But such as must not, cannot be unloos'd.

Vict. No, not unloos'd, but yet one day relax'd,
To grant a lady's suit, unus'd to sue.

Ros. Your highness deals severely with us now,
And proves indeed our freedom is but small,
Who are constrain'd when such a lady sues,

To say, It cannot be.

Vict. It cannot be! Count Basil says not so.

Ros. For that I am his friend, to save him pain
I take th' ungracious office on myself.

Vict. How ill thy face is suited to thine office!

Ros. (*smiling.*) Would I could suit mine office to my face,
If that would please your highness.

Vict. No, you are obstinate and perverse all,
And would not grant it if you had the pow'r.
Albini, I'll retire; come, Isabella.

Bas. (*aside to Ros.*) Ah, Rosinberg! thou hast too far presum'd;
She is offended with us.

Ros. No, she is not—
What dost thou fear? Be firm, and let us go.

Vict. (*pointing to a door leading to other apartments, by which she is ready to go out.*)
These are apartments strangers love to see:
Some famous paintings do their walls adorn:
They lead you also to the palace court
As quickly as the way by which you came.

[Exit Vict. *led out by* Ros. *and followed by* Isab.

Bas. (*aside, looking after them.*) O! what a fool am I! where fled my thoughts?
I might as well as he, now, by her side,
Have held her precious hand enclos'd in mine;
As well as he, who cares not for it neither.
O but he does!' that were impossible!

Albin. You stay behind, my lord.

Bas. Your pardon, Madam; honour me so far—

[Exeunt *handing out* Albini.

SCENE II.—A GALLERY HUNG WITH PICTURES.

Victoria discovered in conversation with Rosinberg, Basil, Albini, and Isabella.

Vict. (*to Ros.*) It is indeed a work of wondrous art.
(*To Isab.*) You call'd Francisco here?

Isab. He comes even now.

Enter Attendant.

Vict. (*to Ros.*) He will conduct you to the northern gall'ry;
Its striking shades will call upon the eye,
To point its place there needs no other guide.

[Exeunt *Ros.* and *Attendant.*

(*To Bas.*) Loves not Count Basil too this charming art?
It is in ancient painting much admir'd.

Bas. Ah! do not banish me these few short moments:
Too soon they will be gone! for ever gone!

Vict. If they are precious to you, say not so,
But add to them another precious day.
A Lady asks it.

Bas. Ah, Madam! ask the life-blood from my heart!
Ask all but what a soldier may not give.

Vict. 'Tis ever thus when favours are denied;
All had been granted but the thing we beg;
And still some great unlikely substitute,
Your life, your soul, your all of earthly good,
Is proffer'd in the room of one small boon.
So keep your life-blood, gen'rous, valiant lord,
And may it long your noble heart enrich,
Until I wish it shed. (Bas. *attempts to speak.*)
Nay, frame no new excuse;
I will not hear it.

(*She puts out her hand as if she would shut his mouth, but at a distance from it;* Bas. *runs eagerly up to her, and presses it to his lips.*)

Bas. Let this sweet hand indeed its threat perform,
And make it heav'n to be for ever dumb!
(Vict. *looks stately and offended.*—Basil *kneels.*)
O pardon me! I know not what I do.
Frown not, reduce me not to wretchedness;
But only grant—

Vict. What should I grant to him,
Who has so oft my earnest suit denied?

Bas. By heaven I'll grant it! I'll do anything:
Say but thou art no more offended with me.

Vict. (*raising him.*) Well, Basil, this good promise is thy pardon.
I will not wait your noble friend's return,
Since we shall meet again.—
You will perform your word?

Bas. I will perform it.

Vict. Farewell, my lord.

[Exit, *with her Ladies.*

Bas. (*alone.*) "Farewell, my lord." O! what delightful sweetness!
The music of that voice dwells on the ear!
"Farewell, my lord!"—Ay, and then look'd she so—
The slightest glance of her bewitching eye,
Those dark blue eyes, commands the inmost soul.
Well, there is yet one day of life before me,
And, whatsoe'er betide, I will enjoy it.
Though but a partial sunshine in my lot,
I will converse with her, gaze on her still,
If all behind were pain and misery.
Pain! Were it not the easing of all pain,
E'en in the dismal gloom of after years,
Such dear remembrance on the mind to wear
Like silv'ry moon-beams on the 'nighted deep,
When heav'n's blest sun is gone?
Kind mercy! how my heart within me beat
When she so sweetly pled the cause of love!
Can she have lov'd? why shrink I at the thought?
Why should she not! no, no, it cannot be—
No man on earth is worthy of her love.
Ah! if she could, how blest a man were he!
Where rove my giddy thoughts? it must not be.
Yet might she well some gentle kindness bear;
Think of him oft, his absent fate inquire,
And, should he fall in battle, mourn his fall.
Yes, she would mourn—such love might she bestow;

And poor of soul the man who would exchange it
For warmest love of the most loving dame!
But here comes Rosinberg—have I done well?
He will not say I have.

Enter Rosinberg.

Ros. Where is the princess?
I'm sorry I return'd not ere she went.
Bas. You'll see her still.
Ros. What, comes she forth again?
Bas. She does to-morrow.
Ros. Thou hast yielded then.
Bas. Come, Rosinberg, I'll tell thee as we go;
It was impossible I should not yield.
Ros. O Basil! thou art weaker than a child.
Bas. Yes, yes, my friend, but 'tis a noble weakness;
A weakness which hath greater things achiev'd
Than all the firm determin'd strength of reason.
By heav'n! I feel a new-born pow'r within me,
Shall make me twenty-fold the man I've been
Before this fated day.
Ros. Fated indeed! but an ill-fated day,
That makes thee other than thy former self.
Yet let it work its will; it cannot change thee
To aught I shall not love.
Bas. Thanks, Rosinberg! thou art a noble heart!
I would not be the man thou couldst not love
For an Imperial Crown. [Exeunt.

Scene III.—A small apartment in the palace.

Enter Duke and Gauriecio.

Duke. The point is gained; my daughter is successful;
And Basil is detain'd another day.
Gaur. But does the princess know your secret aim?
Duke. No, that had marr'd the whole; she is a woman;
Her mind, as suits the sex, too weak and narrow
To relish deep-laid schemes of policy.
Besides, so far unlike a child of mine,
She holds its subtle arts in high derision,
And will not serve us but with bandag'd eyes.
Gauriecio, could I trusty servants find,
Experienc'd, crafty, close, and unrestrain'd
By silly superstitious child-learnt fears,
What might I not effect?
Gaur. O anything!
The deep and piercing genius of your highness,
So ably serv'd, might e'en achieve the empire.
Duke. No, no, my friend, thou dost o'erprize my parts;
Yet mighty things might be—deep subtle wits
In truth, are master spirits in the world.
The brave man's courage, and the student's lore,
Are but as tools his secret ends to work,
Who hath the skill to use them.
This brave Count Basil, dost thou know him well?
Much have we gain'd, but for a single day,
At such a time, to hold his troops detain'd;
When, by that secret message of our spy,
The rival pow'rs are on the brink of action:
But might we more effect? Know'st thou this Basil?
Might he be tamper'd with?
Gaur. That were most dang'rous.—
He is a man, whose sense of right and wrong
To such a high romantic pitch is wound,
And all so hot and fiery is his nature,
The slightest hint, as tho' you did suppose
Baseness and treach'ry in him, so he'll deem it,
Would be to rouse a flame that might destroy.
Duke. But int'rest, int'rest, man's all-ruling pow'r,
Will tame the hottest spirit to your service,
And skilfully applied, mean service too;
E'en as there is an element in nature
Which, when subdu'd will on your hearth fulfil
The lowest uses of domestic wants.
Gaur. Earth-kindled fire, which from a little spark,
On hidden fuel feeds his growing strength,
Till o'er the lofty fabrick it aspires
And rages out its pow'r, may be subdu'd,
And in your base domestic service bound;
But who would madly in its wild career
The fire of heav'n arrest to boil his pot?
No, Basil will not serve your secret schemes,
Tho' you had all to give ambition strives for.
We must beware of him.
Duke. His father was my friend,—I wish'd to gain him:
But since fantastic fancies bind him thus,
The sin be on his head; I stand acquitted,
And must deceive him, even to his ruin.
Gaur. I have prepared Bernardo for your service;
To night he will depart for th' Austrian camp,
And should he find them on the eve of battle,
I've bid him wait the issue of the field.
If that our secret friends victorious prove,
With th' arrow's speed he will return again;
But should fair Fortune crown Piscaro's arms,
Then shall your soothing message greet his ears;
For till our friends some sound advantage gain,
Our actions still must wear an Austrian face.
Duke. Well hast thou school'd him. Didst thou add withal,
That 'tis my will he garnish well his speech,
With honied words of the most dear regard,
And friendly love I bear him? This is needful;
And lest my slowness in the promis'd aid
Awake suspicion, bid him e'en rehearse
The many favours on my house bestow'd
By his Imperial master, as a theme
On which my gratitude delights to dwell.
Gaur. I have, an' please your highness.
Duke. Then 'tis well.

Gaur. But for the yielding up that little fort
There could be no suspicion.
Duke. My Governor I have severely punish'd,
As a most daring traitor to my orders.
He cannot from his darksome dungeon tell;
Why then should they suspect?
Gaur. He must not live should Charles prove victorious.
Duke. He's done me service: say not so, Gauriecio.
Gaur. A traitor's name he will not calmly bear;
He'll tell his tale aloud—he must not live.
Duke. Well, if it must—we'll talk of this again.
Gaur. But while with anxious care and crafty wiles,
You would enlarge the limits of your state,
Your highness must beware lest inward broils
Bring danger near at hand: your northern subjects
E'en now are discontented and unquiet.
Duke. What, dare the ungrateful miscreants thus return
The many favours of my princely grace?
'Tis ever thus indulgence spoils the base;
Raising up pride, and lawless turbulence,
Like noxious vapours from the fulsome marsh
When morning shines upon it.—
Did I not lately with parental care,
When dire invaders their destruction threaten'd,
Provide them all with means of their defence?
Did I not, as a mark of gracious trust,
A body of their vagrant youth select
To guard my sacred person? till that day
An honour never yet allow'd their race.
Did I not suffer them, upon their suit,
T' establish manufactures in their towns?
And after all some chosen soldiers spare
To guard the blessings of interior peace?
Guar. Nay, please your highness, they do well allow,
That when your enemies in fell revenge
Your former inroads threaten'd to repay,
Their ancient arms you did to them restore,
With kind permission to defend themselves:
That so far have they felt your princely grace,
In drafting from their fields their goodliest youth
To be your servants: That you did vouchsafe,
On paying of a large and heavy fine,
Leave to apply the labour of their hands
As best might profit to the country's weal:
And to encourage well their infant trade,
Quarter'd your troops upon them.—Please your grace,
All this they do most readily allow.
Duke. They do allow it then ungrateful varlets!
What would they have? what would they have, Gauriecio!
Guar. Some mitigation of their grievous burdens,
Which, like an iron weight around their necks,
Do bend their care-worn faces to the earth,
Like creatures form'd upon its soil to creep,
Not stand erect, and view the sun of heav'n.
Duke. But they beyond their proper sphere would rise;
Let them their lot fulfil as we do ours.
Society of various parts is form'd;
They are its grounds, its mud, its sediment,
And we the mantling top which crowns the whole.
Calm, steady labour is their greatest bliss;
To aim at higher things beseems them not.
To let them work in peace my care shall be;
To slacken labour is to nourish pride.
Methinks thou art a pleader for these fools:
What may this mean, Gauriecio?
Gaur. They were resolv'd to lay their cause before you,
And would have found some other advocate
Less pleasing to your Grace had I refus'd.
Duke. Well, let them know, some more convenient season
I'll think of this, and do for them as much
As suits the honour of my princely state.
Their prince's honour should be ever dear
To worthy subjects as their precious lives.
Gaur. I fear, unless you give some special promise,
They will be violent still—
Duke. Then do it, if the wretches are so bold:
We can retract it when the times allow;
'Tis of small consequence. Go see Bernardo,
And come to me again. [Exit.
Gaur. *(solus)* O happy people! whose indulgent lord
From ev'ry care, with which increasing wealth,
With all its hopes and fears, doth ever move
The human breast, most graciously would free,
And kindly leave you nought to do but toil!
This creature now, with all his reptile cunning,
Writhing and turning through a maze of wiles,
Believes his genius form'd to rule mankind;
And calls his sordid wish for territory
That noblest passion of the soul, ambition.
Born had he been to follow some low trade,
A petty tradesman still he had remain'd,
And us'd the art with which he rules a state
To circumvent his brothers of the craft,
Or cheat the buyers of his paltry ware.
And yet he thinks,—ha, ha, ha, ha!—he thinks
I am the tool and servant of his will.
Well, let it be; thro' all the maze of trouble
His plots and base oppression must create,
I'll shape myself a way to higher things:
And who will say 'tis wrong?
A sordid being, who expects no faith
But as self-interest binds; who would not trust
The strongest ties of nature on the soul,
Deserves no faithful service. Perverse fate!
Were I like him, I would despise this dealing;
But being as I am, born low in fortune,
Yet with a mind aspiring to be great,

I must not scorn the steps which lead to it:
And if they are not right, no saint am I;
I follow nature's passion in my breast,
Which urges me to rise in spite of fortune.
[EXIT.

SCENE IV.—AN APARTMENT IN THE PALACE.

VICTORIA and ISABELLA are discovered playing at Chess; the Countess ALBINI sitting by them reading to herself.

Vict. Away with it, I will not play again.
May men no more be foolish in my presence
If thou art not a cheat, an arrant cheat!
Isab. To swear that I am false by such an oath,
Should prove me honest, since its forfeiture
Would bring your highness gain.
Vict. Thou'rt wrong, my Isabella, simple maid;
For in the very forfeit of this oath,
There's death to all the dearest pride of women.
May man no more be foolish in my presence!
Isab. And does your grace, hail'd by applauding crowds,
In all the graceful eloquence address'd
Of most accomplish'd, noble, courtly youths,
Prais'd in the songs of heav'n-inspired bards,
Those awkward proofs of admiration prize,
Which rustic swains their village fair ones pay!
Vict. O, love will master all the power of art!
Ay, all! and she who never has beheld
The polish'd courtier, or the tuneful sage,
Before the glances of her conqu'ring eye
A very native simple swain become,
Has only vulgar charms.
To make the cunning artless, tame the rude,
Subdue the haughty, shake the undaunted soul;
Yea, put a bridle in the lion's mouth,
And lead him forth as a domestic cur,
These are the triumphs of all-powerful beauty!
Did nought but flatt'ring words and tuneful praise,
Sighs, tender glances, and obsequious service,
Attend her presence, it were nothing worth:
I'd put a white coif o'er my braided locks,
And be a plain, good, simple, fire-side dame.
Alb. (raising her head from her book.) And is, indeed, a plain domestic dame,
Who fills the duties of an useful state,
A being of less dignity than she,
Who vainly on her transient beauty builds
A little poor ideal tyranny?
Isab. Ideal too!
Alb. Yes, most unreal pow'r;
For she who only finds her self-esteem
In others' admiration, begs an alms;
Depends on others for her daily food,
And is the very servant of her slaves;
Tho' oftentimes, in a fantastic hour,
O'er men she may a childish pow'r exert,
Which not ennobles, but degrades her state.
Vict. You are severe, Albini, most severe!
Were human passions plac'd within the breast
But to be curb'd, subdu'd, pluck'd by the roots!
All heaven's gifts to some good end were giv'n.
Alb. Yes, for a noble, for a generous end.
Vict. Am I ungen'rous then?
Alb. Yes, most ungen'rous:
Who, for the pleasure of a little pow'r,
Would give most unavailing pain to those
Whose love you ne'er can recompense again.
E'en now, to-day, O! was it not ungen'rous
To fetter Basil with a foolish tie,
Against his will, perhaps against his duty?
Vict. What, dost thou think against his will, my friend?
Alb. Full sure I am against his reason's will.
Vict. Ah! but indeed thou must excuse me here;
For duller than a shelled crab were she,
Who could suspect her pow'r in such a mind,
And calmly leave it doubtful and unprov'd.
But wherefore dost thou look so gravely on me?
Ah! well I read those looks! methinks they say,
"Your mother did not so."
Alb. Your highness reads them true, she did not so.
If foolish vanity e'er soil'd her thoughts,
She kept it low, withheld its aliment;
Not pamper'd it with ev'ry motley food,
From the fond tribute of a noble heart
To the lisp'd flattery of a cunning child.
Vict. Nay, speak not thus,—Albini, speak not thus
Of little blue-ey'd, sweet, fair-hair'd Mirando.
He is the orphan of a hapless pair;
A loving, beautiful, but hapless pair,
Whose story is so pleasing, and so sad,
The swains have turn'd it to a plaintive lay,
And sing it as they tend their mountain sheep.
Besides, *(to Isab.)* I am the guardian of his choice.
When first I saw him—dost thou not remember?
Isab. 'Twas in the publick garden.
Vict. Even so;
Perch'd in his nurse's arms, a roughsome quean,
Ill suited to the lovely charge she bore.
How steadfastly he fixed his looks upon me,
His dark eyes shining thro' forgotten tears;
Then stretch'd his little arms and call'd me mother!
What could I do? I took the bantling home—
I could not tell the imp he had no mother.
Alb. Ah! there, my child, thou hast indeed no blame.
Vict. Now this is kindly said: thanks, sweet Albini!
Still call me child, and chide me as thou wilt.
O! would that I were such as thou couldst love!
Couldst dearly love, as thou didst love my mother!

Alb. *(pressing her to her breast.)* And do I not? all perfect as she was,
I know not that she went so near my heart
As thou with all thy faults.

Vict. And say'st thou so? would I had sooner known!
I had done anything to give thee pleasure.

Alb. Then do so now, and put thy faults away.

Vict. No, say not faults; the freaks of thoughtless youth.

Alb. Nay, very faults they must indeed be call'd.

Vict. O! say but foibles! youthful foibles only!

Alb. Faults, faults, real faults you must confess they are.

Vict. In truth I cannot do your sense the wrong
To think so poorly of the one you love.

Alb. I must be gone: thou hast o'ercome me now:
Another time I will not yield it so. [Exit.

Isab. The Countess is severe, she's too severe:
She once was young tho' now advanc'd in years.

Vict. No, I deserve it all; she is most worthy.
Unlike those faded beauties of the court,
But now the wither'd stems of former flowers
With all their blossoms shed, her nobler mind
Procures to her the privilege of man,
Ne'er to be old till nature's strength decays.
Some few years hence, if I should live so long,
I'd be Albini rather than myself.

Isab. Here comes your little fav'rite.

Vict. I am not in the humour for him now.

Enter Mirando, running up to Victoria, and taking hold of her gown, whilst she takes no notice of him, as he holds up his mouth to be kissed.

Isab. *(to Mir.)* Thou seest the princess can't be troubled with thee.

Mir. O but she will! I'll scramble up her robe,
As naughty boys do when they climb for apples.

Isab. Come here, sweet child; I'll kiss thee in her stead.

Mir. Nay, but I will not have a kiss of thee.
Would I were tall! O were I but so tall!

Isab. And how tall wouldst thou be?

Mir. Thou dost not know?
Just tall enough to reach Victoria's lips.

Vict. *(embracing him.)* O! I must bend to this, thou little urchin.
Who taught thee all this wit, this childish wit?
Whom does Mirando love? *(embraces him again.)*

Mir. He loves Victoria.

Vict. And wherefore loves he her?

Mir. Because she's pretty.

Isab. Hast thou no little prate to-day, Mirando?
No tale to earn a sugar-plum withal?

Mir. Ay, that I have: I know who loves her grace.

Vict. Who is it, pray? thou shalt have comfits for it.

Mir. *(looking slyly at her.)* It is—it is—it is the Count of Maldo.

Vict. Away, thou little chit! that tale is old,
And was not worth a sugar-plum when new.

Mir. Well then, I know who loves her highness well.

Vict. Who is it then?

Isab. Who is it, naughty boy?

Mir. It is the handsome marquis of Carlatzi.

Vict. No, no, Mirando, thou art naughty still:
Twice have I paid thee for that tale already.

Mir. Well then, indeed—I know who loves Victoria.

Vict. And who is he?

Mir. It is Mirando's self.

Vict. Thou little imp! this story is not new,
But thou shalt have thy hire. Come, let us go.
Go, run before us, Boy.

Mir. Nay, but I'll shew you how Count Wolvar look'd,
When he conducted Isabel from Court.

Vict. How did he look?

Mir. Give me your hand: he held his body thus;
(putting himself in a ridiculous bowing posture.)
And then he whisper'd softly; then look'd so;
(ogling with his eyes affectedly.)
Then she look'd so, and smil'd to him again.
(throwing down his eyes affectedly.)

Isab. Thou art a little knave, and must be whipp'd.

[Exeunt. Mirando *leading out* Victoria *affectedly.*

ACT III.

Scene I.—An open street, or square.

Enter Rosinberg and Frederick, by opposite sides of the Stage.

Fred. So Basil, from the pressing calls of war,
Another day to rest and pastime gives.
How is it now? methinks thou art not pleas'd.

Ros. It matters little if I am or not.

Fred. Now pray thee do confess thou art asham'd:
Thou, who art wisely wont to set at nought
The noble fire of individual courage,
And call calm prudence the superiour virtue,
What say'st thou now, my candid Rosinberg,
When thy great captain, in a time like this,
Denies his weary troops one day of rest
Before th' exertions of approaching battle,
Yet grants it to a pretty lady's suit?

Ros. Who told thee this? it was no friendly tale;
And no one else, besides a trusty friend,
Could know his motives. Then thou wrongs't me too;
For I admire, as much as thou dost, Fred'rick,
The fire of valour, e'en rash heedless valour;
But not like thee do I depreciate
That far superiour, yea, that godlike talent,
Which doth direct that fire, because indeed
It is a talent nature has denied me.

Fred. Well, well, and greatly he may boast his virtue,
Who risks perhaps th' Imperial army's fate,
To please a lady's freaks—

Ros. Go, go, thou'rt prejudic'd:
A passion, which I do not chuse to name,
Has warp'd thy judgement.

Fred. No, by heav'n thou wrong'st me!
I do, with most enthusiastick warmth,
True valour love: wherever he is found,
I love the hero too; but hate to see
The praises due to him so cheaply earn'd.

Ros. Then mayst thou now these gen'rous feelings prove.
Behold that man, whose short and grizzly hair
In clust'ring locks his dark brown face o'ershades;
Where now the scars of former sabre wounds,
In hon'rable companionship are seen
With the deep lines of age; whose piercing eye
Beneath its shading eyebrow keenly darts
Its yet unquenched beams, as tho' in age
Its youthful fire had been again renew'd,
To be the guardian of its darken'd mate:
See with what vig'rous steps his upright form
He onward bears; nay, e'en that vacant sleeve,
Which droops so sadly by his better side,
Suits not ungracefully the vet'ran's mien.
This is the man, whose glorious acts in battle
We heard to-day related o'er our wine.
I go to tell the gen'ral he is come:
Enjoy the gen'rous feelings of thy breast,
And make an old man happy. [Exit.

Enter Geoffry.

Fred. Brave soldier, let me profit by the chance
That led me here; I've heard of thy exploits.

Geof. Ah! then you have but heard an ancient tale,
Which has been long forgotten.

Fred. But true it is, and should not be forgotten;
Tho' gen'rals jealous of their soldiers' fame,
May dash it with neglect.

Geof. There are, perhaps, who may be so ungen'rous.

Fred. Perhaps, say'st thou? in very truth there are.
How art thou else rewarded with neglect,
Whilst many a paltry fellow in thy corps
Has been promoted? it is ever thus.
Serv'd not Mardini in your company?
He was, tho' honour'd with a valiant name,
To those who knew him well, a paltry soldier.

Geof. Your pardon, Sir: we did esteem him much,
Altho' inferiour to his gallant friend,
The brave Sebastian.

Fred. The brave Sebastian!
He was, as I am told, a learned coxcomb,
And lov'd a goose-quill better than a sword.
What, dost thou call him brave?
Thou, who dost bear about that war-worn trunk,
Like an old target, hack'd and rough with wounds,
Whilst, after all his mighty battles, he
Was with a smooth skin in his coffin laid,
Unblemish'd with a scar?

Geof. His duty call'd not to such desp'rate service;
For I have sought where few alive remain'd,
And none unscath'd; where but a few remain'd,
Thus marr'd and mangled; (*showing his wounds.*) as belike you've seen,
O' summer nights, around the evening lamp,
Some wretched moths, wingless, and half consum'd,
Just feebly crawling o'er their heaps of dead.—
In Savoy, on a small, tho' desp'rate post,
Of full three hundred goodly chosen men,
But twelve were left, and right dear friends were we
For ever after. They are all dead now:
I'm old and lonely.—We were valiant hearts—
Fred'rick Dewalter would have stopp'd a breach
Against the devil himself. I'm lonely now!

Fred. I'm sorry for thee. Hang ungrateful chiefs!
Why wert thou not promoted?

Geof. After that battle, where my happy fate
Had led me to fulfil a glorious part,
Chaf'd with the gibing insults of a slave,
The worthless fav'rite of a great man's fav'rite,
I rashly did affront; our cautious prince,
With narrow policy dependant made,
Dar'd not, as I am told, promote me then,
And now he is asham'd or has forgot it.

Fred. Fye, fye, upon it! let him be asham'd:
Here is a trifle for thee—(*offering him money.*)

Geof. No, good sir;
I have enough to live as poor men do.
When I'm in want I'll thankfully receive,
Because I'm poor, but not because I'm brave.

Fred. You're proud, old soldier.

Geof. No, I am not proud;
For if I were, methinks I'd be morose,
And willing to depreciate other men.

Enter Rosinberg.

Ros. (*clapping* Geof. *on the shoulder.*) How goes it with thee now, my good Field-marshal?

Geof. The better that I see your honour well,
And in the humour to be merry with me.

Ros. 'Faith, by my sword, I've rightly nam'd thee too;
What is a good Field-marshal, but a man,
Whose gen'rous courage and undaunted mind
Doth marshal others on in glory's way?
Thou art not one by princely favour dubb'd,
But one of nature's making.

Geof. You shew, my lord, such pleasant courtesy,
I know not how—

Ros. But see, the gen'ral comes.

Enter Basil.

Ros. (*pointing to* Geof.) Behold the worthy vet'ran.

Bas. (*taking him by the hand.*) Brave honourable man, your worth I know,
And greet it with a brother soldier's love.

Geof. (*taking away his hand in confusion.*)
My gen'ral, this is too much, too much honour.

Bas. (*taking his hand again.*) No, valiant soldier, I must have it so.

Geof. My humble state agrees not with such honour.

Bas. Think not of it, thy state is not thyself.
Let mean souls, highly rank'd, look down on thee,
As the poor dwarf, perch'd on a pedestal,
O'erlooks the giant: 'tis not worth a thought.
Art thou not Geoffry of the tenth brigade,
Whose warlike feats, child, maid, and matron know?
And oft, cross-elbow'd, o'er his nightly bowl,
The jolly toper to his comrade tells?
Whose glorious feats of war, by cottage door,
The ancient soldier, tracing in the sand
The many movements of the varied field,
In warlike terms to list'ning swains relates;
Whose bosoms glowing at the wondrous tale
First learn to scorn the hind's inglorious life;
Shame seize me, if I would not rather be
The man thou art, than court-created chief,
Known only by the dates of his promotion!

Geof. Ah! would I were, would I were young again,
To fight beneath your standard, noble gen'ral;
Methinks what I have done were but a jest,
Ay, but a jest to what I now should do,
Were I again the man that I have been.
O! I could fight!

Bas. And wouldst thou fight for me?

Geof. Ay, to the death!

Bas. Then come, brave man, and be my champion still:
The sight of thee will fire my soldiers' breasts;
Come, noble vet'ran, thou shalt fight for me.
[Exit *with* Geoffry.

Fred. What does he mean to do?

Ros. We'll know ere long.

Fred. Our gen'ral bears it with a careless face,
For one so wise.

Ros. A careless face? on what?

Fred. Now feign not ignorance, we know it all.
News which have spread in whispers from the court,
Since last night's messenger arrived from Milan.

Ros. As I'm an honest man, I know it not;

Fred 'Tis said the rival armies are so near
A battle must immediately ensue.

Ros. It cannot be. Our gen'ral knows it not.
The Duke is of our side a sworn ally,
And had such messenger to Mantua come,
He would have been appriz'd upon the instant.
It cannot be, it is some idle tale.

Fred. So may it prove till we have join'd them too—
Then heaven grant they may be nearer still!
For O! my soul for war and danger pants,
As doth the noble lion for his prey.
My soul delights in battle.

Ros. Upon my simple word, I'd rather see
A score of friendly fellows shaking hands,
Than all the world in arms. Hast thou no fear?

Fred. What dost thou mean?

Ros. Hast thou no fear of death?

Fred. Fear is a name for something in the mind,
But what, from inward sense, I cannot tell.
I could as little anxious march to battle,
As when a boy to childish games I ran.

Ros. Then as much virtue hast thou in thy valour,
As when a child thou hadst in childish play.
The brave man is not he who feels no fear,
For that were stupid and irrational;
But he, whose noble soul its fear subdues,
And bravely dares the danger nature shrinks from.
As for your youth, whom blood and blows delight,
Away with them! there is not in the crew
One valiant spirit.—Ha! what sound is this?
(*shouting is heard without.*)

Fred. The soldiers shout; I'll run and learn the cause.

Ros. But tell me first, how didst thou like the vet'ran?

Fred. He is too proud; he was displeas'd with me,
Because I offer'd him a little sum.

Ros. What, money! O! most gen'rous noble spirit!
Noble rewarder of superiour worth!
A halfpenny for Belisarius!
But hark! they shout again—here comes Valtomer.
(*Shouting heard without.*)

Enter Valtomer.

What does this shouting mean?

Valt. O! I have seen a sight, a glorious sight!
Thou wouldst have smil'd to see it.

Ros. How smile? methinks thine eyes are wet with tears.

Valt. (*passing the back of his hands across his eyes.*)
'Faith so they are; well, well, but I smil'd too.
You heard the shouting.

Ros. and Fred. Yes.

Valt. O had you seen it!
Drawn out in goodly ranks, there stood our troops;
Here, in the graceful state of manly youth,
His dark face brighten'd with a gen'rous smile,
Which to his eyes such flashing lustre gave,
As tho' his soul, like an unsheathed sword,
Had thro' them gleam'd, our noble gen'ral stood;
And to his soldiers, with heart-moving words
The vet'ran showing, his brave deeds rehears'd;
Who by his side stood like a storm-scath'd oak,
Beneath the shelter of some noble tree,
In the green honours of its youthful prime.

Ros. How look'd the veteran?

Valt. I cannot tell thee!
At first he bore it up with cheerful looks,
As one who fain would wear his honors bravely
And greet the soldiers with a comrade's face:
But when Count Basil, in such moving speech,
Told o'er his actions past, and bade his troops
Great deeds to emulate, his count'nance chang'd;
High-heav'd his manly breast, as it had been
By inward strong emotion half convuls'd;
Trembled his nether lip; he shed some tears:
The gen'ral paus'd, the soldiers shouted loud;
Then hastily he brush'd the drops away,
And wav'd his hand, and clear'd his tear-chok'd voice,
As tho' he would some grateful answer make;
When back with double force the whelming tide
Of passion came; high o'er his hoary head
His arm he toss'd, and heedless of respect,
In Basil's bosom hid his aged face,
Sobbing aloud. From the admiring ranks
A cry arose; still louder shouts resound.
I felt a sudden tightness grasp my throat
As it would strangle me; such as I felt,
I knew it well, some twenty years ago,
When my good father shed his blessing on me:
I hate to weep, and so I came away.

Ros. (*giving* Valt. *his hand.*) And there, take thou my blessing for the tale.
Hark how they shout again! 'tis nearer now.
This way they march.

Martial Musick heard. Enter Soldiers marching in order, bearing GEOFFRY in triumph on their shoulders. After them enter BASIL; the whole preceded by a band of musick. They cross over the stage, are joined by Ros. &c. and EXEUNT.

SCENE. II.

Enter GAURIECIO and a GENTLEMAN, talking as they enter.

Gaur. So slight a tie as this we cannot trust:
One day her influence may detain him here,
But love a feeble agent may be found
With the ambitious.

Gent. And so you think this boyish odd conceit
Of bearing home in triumph with his troops
That aged soldier, will your purpose serve?

Gaur. Yes, I will make it serve; for tho' my prince
Is little scrupulous of right and wrong,
I have possess'd his mind, as tho' it were
A flagrant insult on his princely state,
To honour thus the man he has neglected,
Which makes him relish, with a keener taste,
My purpos'd scheme. Come let us fall to work.
With all their warm heroick feelings rous'd,
We'll spirit up his troops to mutiny,
Which must retard, perhaps undo him quite.
Thanks to his childish love, which has so well
Procur'd us time to tamper with the fools.

Gent. Ah! but those feelings he has wak'd within them,
Are gen'rous feelings, and endear himself.

Gaur. It matters not; tho' gen'rous in their nature,
They yet may serve a most ungen'rous end;
And he who teaches men to think, tho' nobly,
Doth raise within their minds a busy judge
To scan his actions. Send thine agents forth,
And sound it in their ears how much Count Basil
Affects all difficult and desp'rate service,
To raise his fortunes by some daring stroke;
Having unto the Emp'rour pledg'd his word,
To make his troops all dreadful hazards brave:
For which intent he fills their simple minds
With idle tales of glory and renown;
Using their warm attachment to himself
For most unworthy ends.
This is the busy time: go forth, my friend;
Mix with the soldiers, now in jolly groups
Around their ev'ning cups. There, spare no cost, (*gives him a purse.*)
Observe their words, see how the poison takes,
And then return again.

Gent. I will, my lord.

(EXEUNT *severally.*

SCENE III. A SUITE OF GRAND APARTMENTS, WITH THEIR WIDE DOORS THROWN OPEN, LIGHTED UP WITH LAMPS, AND FILLED WITH COMPANY IN MASKS.

Enter several Masks, and pass through the first apartment to the other rooms. Then enter BASIL in the disguise of a wounded soldier.

Bas. (*alone.*) Now am I in the region of delight!
Within the blessed compass of these walls
She is; the gay light of those blazing lamps
Doth shine upon her, and this painted floor
Is with her footsteps press'd. E'en now, perhaps,
Amidst that motley rout she plays her part:
There will I go; she cannot be conceal'd;
For but the flowing of her graceful robe
Will soon betray the lovely form that wears it,

Tho' in a thousand masks. Ye homely weeds,— (*looking at his habit.*)
Which half conceal, and half declare my state,
Beneath your kind disguise, O! let me prosper,
And boldly take the privilege ye give:
Follow her mazy steps, crowd by her side;
Thus, near her face my list'ning ear incline
And feel her soft breath fan my glowing cheek,
Her fair hand seize, yea, press it closely too!
May it not be e'en so? by heav'n it shall!
This once, O! serve me well, and ever after
Ye shall be treasur'd like a monarch's robes;
Lodg'd in my chamber, near my pillow kept;
And oft with midnight lamp I'll visit ye,
And gazing wistfully, this night recall,
With all its past delights.—But yonder moves
A slender form, dress'd in an azure robe;
It moves not like the rest—it must be she!
(*Goes hastily into another apartment, and mixes with the masks.*)

Enter ROSINBERG, fantastically dressed, with a willow upon his head, and scraps of sonnets, and torn letters fluttering round his neck; pursued by a group of masks from one of the inner apartments, who hoot at him, and push him about as he enters.

1st Mask. Away, thou art a saucy jeering knave,
And fain wouldst make a jest of all true love.
Ros. Nay, gentle ladies, do not buffet me:
I am a right true servant of the fair;
And as this woeful chaplet on my brow,
And these tear-blotted sonnets would denote,
A poor abandon'd lover, out of place;
With any lover ready to engage,
Who will enlist me in her loving service.
Of a convenient kind my talents are,
And to all various humours may be shap'd.
2d Mask. What canst thou do?
3d Mask. Ay, what besides offending?
Ros. O! I can sigh so deeply, look so sad,
Pule out a piteous tale on bended knee;
Groan like a ghost; so very wretched be,
As would delight a tender lady's heart
But to behold.
1st Mask. Poo, poo, insipid fool!
Ros. But should my lady brisker mettle own,
And tire of all those gentle dear delights,
Such pretty little quarrels I'd invent—
As whether such a fair one (some dear friend)
Whose squirrel's tail was pinch'd, or the soft maid,
With fav'rite lap-dog of a surfeit sick,
Have greatest cause of delicate distress;
Or whether—
1st Mask. Go, too bad thou art indeed!
(*aside.*) How could he know I quarell'd with the Count?
2d Mask. Wilt thou do nothing for thy lady's fame?
Ros. Yes, lovely shepherdess, on ev'ry tree
I'll carve her name, with true-love garlands bound:
Write madrigals upon her roseate cheeks;
Odes to her eye; 'faith ev'ry wart and mole
That spots her snowy skin, shall have its sonnet!
I'll make love posies for her thimble's edge,
Rather than please her not.
3d Mask. But for her sake what dangers wilt thou brave?
Ros. In truth, fair Nun, I stomach dangers less
Than other service, and were something loth
To storm a convent's walls for one dear glance;
But if she'll wisely manage this alone,
As maids have done come o'er the wall herself,
And meet me fairly on the open plain,
I will engage her tender steps to aid
In all annoyance of rude brier or stone,
Or crossing rill, some half-foot wide, or so,
Which that fair lady should unaided pass,
Ye gracious pow'rs forbid! I will defend
Against each hideous fly, whose dreadful buz—
4th Mask. Such paltry service suits thee best indeed.
What maid of spirit would not spurn thee from her?
Ros. Yes, to recall me soon, sublime Sultana!
For I can stand the burst of female passion,
Each change of humour and affected storm;
Be scolded, frown'd upon, to exile sent,
Recall'd, caress'd chid, and disgrac'd again;
And say what maid of spirit would forego
The bliss of one to exercise it thus?
O! I can bear ill treatment like a lamb!
4th Mask. (*beating him.*) Well, bear it then, thou hast deserv'd it well.
Ros. 'Zounds, lady! do not give such heavy blows;
I'm not your husband, as belike you guess.
5th Mask. Come, lover, I enlist thee for my swain;
Therefore, good lady, do forbear your blows,
Nor thus assume my rights.
Ros. Agreed. Wilt thou a gracious mistress prove?
5th Mask Such as thou wouldst, such as thy genius suits;
For since of universal scope it is,
All women's humour shalt thou find in me.
I'll gently soothe thee with such winning smiles—
To nothing sink thee with a scornful frown:
Tease thee with peevish and affected freaks;
Caress thee, love thee, hate thee, break thy pate;
But still between the whiles I'll careful be,
In feigned admiration of thy parts,
Thy shape, thy manners, or thy graceful mien,
To bind thy giddy soul with flatt'ry's charm;
For well thou know'st that flatt'ry ever is
The tickling spice, the pungent seasoning
Which makes this motley dish of monstrous scraps
So pleasing to the dainty lover's taste.
Thou canst not leave, tho' violent in extreme,
And most vexatious in her teasing moods,
Thou canst not leave the fond admiring soul,
Who did declare, when calmer reason rul'd

Thou hadst a pretty leg.
Ros. Marry, thou hast the better of me there.
5th Mask. And more; I'll pledge to thee my honest word,
That when your noble swainship shall bestow
More faithful homage on the simple maid,
Who loves you with sincerity and truth,
Than on the changeful and capricious tyrant,
Who mocking leads you like a trammell'd ass,
My studied woman's wiles I'll lay aside,
And such a one become.
Ros. Well spoke, brave lady; I will follow thee.
(*follows her to the corner of the stage.*)
Now on my life, these ears of mine I'd give,
To have but one look of that little face,
Where such a biting tongue doth hold its court
To keep the fools in awe. Nay, nay, unmask:
I'm sure thou hast a pair of wicked eyes,
A short and saucy nose: now pri'thee do.
(*unmasking.*)
Alb. (*unmasking.*) Well, hast thou guess'd me right?
Ros. (*bowing low.*) Wild freedom, chang'd to most profound respect,
Doth make an awkward booby of me now.
Alb. I've join'd your frolick with a good intent,
For much I wish'd to gain your private ear.
The time is precious, and I must be short.
Ros. On me your slightest word more pow'r will have,
Most honour'd lady, than a conn'd oration.
Thou art the only one of all thy sex,
Who wear'st thy years with such a winning grace,
Thou art the more admir'd the more thou fads't.
Alb. I thank your lordship for these courteous words;
But to my purpose—You are Basil's friend:
Be friendly to him then, and warn him well
This court to leave, nor be allur'd to stay;
For if he does, there's mischief waits him here
May prove the bane of all his future days.
Remember this, I must no longer stay.
God bless your friend and you; I love you both. Exit.
Ros. (*alone.*) What may this warning mean? I had my fears.
There's something hatching which I know not of.
I've lost all spirit for this masking now.
(*throwing away his papers and his willows.*)
Away, ye scraps! I have no need of you.
I would I knew what garment Basil wears:
I watch'd him, yet he did escape my sight;
But I must search again and find him out.
[Exit.

Enter Basil muc hagitated, with his mask in his hand.

Bas. In vain I've sought her, follow'd ev'ry form
Where aught appear'd of dignity or grace:
I've listen'd to the tone of ev'ry voice;
I've watch'd the entrance of each female mask;
My flutt'ring heart rous'd like a startled hare,
With the imagin'd rustling of her robes,
At ev'ry dame's approach. Deceitful night,
How art thou spent! where are thy promis'd joys?
How much of thee is gone! O spiteful fate!
Yet within the compass of these walls
Somewhere she is, altho', to me she is not.
Some other eye doth gaze upon her form,
Some other ear doth listen to her voice;
Some happy fav'rite doth enjoy the bliss
My spiteful stars deny.
Disturber of my soul! what veil conceals thee?
What dev'lish spell is o'er this cursed hour?
O heav'ns and earth! where art thou?

Enter a Mask in the dress of a female conjurer.

Mask. Methinks thou art impatient, valiant soldier:
Thy wound doth gall thee sorely; is it so?
Bas. Away, away, I cannot fool with thee.
Mask. I have some potent drugs may ease thy smart.
Where is thy wound? is't here?
(*pointing to the bandage on his arm.*)
Bas. Poo, poo, begone!
Thou canst do nought—'tis in my head, my heart—
'Tis ev'ry where, where medicine cannot cure.
Mask. If wounded in the heart, it is a wound
Which some ungrateful fair one hath inflicted,
And I may conjure something for thy good.
Bas. Ah! if thou couldst! what, must I fool with thee?
Mask. Thou must awhile, and be examin'd too.
What kind of woman did the wicked deed?
Bas. I cannot tell thee. In her presence still
My mind in such a wild delight hath been,
I could not pause to picture out her beauty,
Yet naught of woman e'er was form'd so fair.
Mask. Art thou a soldier, and no weapon bear'st
To send her wound for wound?
Bas. Alas! she shoots from such a hopeless height,
No dart of mine hath plume to mount so far.
None but a prince may dare.
Mask. But, if thou hast no hope, thou hast no love.
Bas. I love, and yet in truth I had no hope,
But that she might at least with some good will,
Some gentle pure regard, some secret kindness,
Within her dear remembrance give me place.
This was my all of hope, but it is flown:
For she regards me not; despises, scorns me:
Scorns, I must say it too, a noble heart,
That would have bled for her.
(*Mask, discovering herself to be* Victoria, *by speaking in her true voice.*) O! no, she does not.

[Exit *hastily in confusion.*

Bas. (*stands for a moment rivetted to the spot, then holds up both his hands in an ecstacy*).

It is herself! it is her blessed self!
O! what a fool am I, that had no power
To follow her, and urge th' advantage on.
Begone, unmanly fears! I must be bold.

Exit *after her.*

A Dance of Masks.

Enter Duke and Gauriecio, unmasked.

Duke. This revelry, methinks, goes gaily on.
The hour is late, and yet your friend returns not.

Gaur. He will return ere long—nay, there he comes.

Enter Gentleman.

Duke. Does all go well? (*going close up to him.*)

Gent. All as your grace could wish.
For now the poison works, and the stung soldiers
Rage o'er their cups, and, with fire-kindled eyes,
Swear vengeance on the chief who would betray them.
That Frederick too, the discontented man
Of whom your highness was so lately told,
Swallows the bait, and does his part most bravely.
Gauriecio counsel'd well to keep him blind,
Nor with a bribe attempt him. On my soul!
He is so fiery he had spurn'd us else,
And ruin'd all the plot.

Duke. Speak softly, friend—I'll hear it all in private.
A gay and careless face we now assume.

Duke, Gaur. and Gent. retire into the inner apartment, appearing to laugh and talk gaily to the different masks as they pass them.

Re-enter Victoria followed by Basil.

Vict. Forbear, my lord; these words offend mine ear.

Bas. Yet let me but this once, this once offend,
Nor thus with thy displeasure punish me;
And if my words against all prudence sin,
O! hear them, as the good of heart do list
To the wild ravings of a soul distraught.

Vict. If I indeed should listen to thy words,
They must not talk of love.

Bas. To be with thee, to speak, to hear thee speak,
To claim the soft attention of thine eye,
I'd be content to talk of any thing,
If it were possible to be with thee,
And think of aught but love.

Vict. I fear, my lord, you have too much presum'd
On those unguarded words, which were in truth
Utter'd at unawares, with little heed,
And urge their meaning far beyond the right.

Bas. I thought, indeed, that they were kindly meant,
As tho' thy gentle breast did kindly feel
Some secret pity for my hopeless pain,
And would not pierce with scorn, ungen'rous scorn,
A heart so deeply stricken.

Vict. So far thou'st read it well.

Bas. Ha! have I well?
Thou dost not hate me then?

Vict. My father comes;
He were displeas'd if he should see thee thus.

Bas. Thou dost not hate me, then?

Vict. Away! he'll be displeased—I cannot say—

Bas. Well, let him come: it is thyself I fear;
For did destruction thunder o'er my head,
By the dread pow'r of heav'n I would not stir,
Till thou hadst answer'd my impatient soul!
Thou dost not hate me?

Vict. Nay, nay, let go thy hold—I cannot hate thee.

(*breaks from him and exit.*)

Bas. (*Alone.*) Thou canst not hate me! no, thou canst not hate me!
For I love thee so well, so passing well,
With such o'erflowing heart, so very dearly,
That it were sinful not to pay me back
Some small, some kind return.

Enter Mirando dressed like Cupid.

Mir. Bless thee, brave soldier.

Bas. What say'st thou, pretty child! what playful fair
Has deck'd thee out in this fantastick guise?

Mir. It was Victoria's self; it was the princess.

Bas. Thou art her fav'rite, then?

Mir. They say I am:
And now, between ourselves, I'll tell thee, soldier,
I think in very truth she loves me well.
Such merry little songs she teaches me—
Sly riddles too, and when I'm laid to rest,
Ofttimes on tip-toe near my couch she steals,
And lifts the cov'ring so, to look upon me.
And oftentimes I fein as tho' I slept;
For then her warm lips to my cheek she lays,
And pats me softly with her fair white hands;
And then I laugh, and thro' mine eyelids peep,
And then she tickles me, and calls me cheat;
And then we so do laugh, ha, ha, ha, ha!

Bas. What! does she even so, thou happiest child?
And have those rosy cheeks been press'd so dearly?
Delicious urchin! I will kiss thee too.
(*takes him eagerly up in his arms, and kisses him.*)

Mir. No, let me down, thy kisses are so rough,
So furious rough—she doth not kiss me so.

Bas. Sweet boy, where is thy chamber? by Victoria's?

Mir. Hard by her own.

Bas. Then will I come beneath thy window soon:
And, if I could, some pretty song I'd sing,
To lull thee to thy rest.

Mir. O no, thou must not! 'tis a frightful place;
It is the church-yard of the neighb'ring dome.
The princess loves it for the lofty trees,
Whose spreading branches shade her chamber walls:
So do not I; for when 'tis dark o'nights,
Goblins howl there, and ghosts rise thro' the ground.
I hear them many a time when I'm a bed,
And hide beneath the clothes my cow'ring head.
O! is it not a frightful thing, my lord,
To sleep alone i' the dark?

Bas. Poor harmless child! thy prate is wondrous sweet.

Enter a group of Masks.

1st Mask. What dost thou here, thou little truant boy?
Come play thy part with us.

Masks place MIRANDO in the middle, and range themselves round him.

SONG.—A GLEE.

Child, with many a childish wile,
Timid look, and blushing smile,
Downy wings to steal thy way,
Gilded bow, and quiver gay,
Who in thy simple mien would trace
The tyrant of the human race?

Who is he whose flinty heart
Hath not felt the flying dart?
Who is he that from the wound
Hath not pain and pleasure found?
Who is he that hath not shed
Curse and blessings on thy head?
Ah Love! our weal, our woe, our bliss, our bane,
A restless life have they who wear thy chain!
Ah Love! our weal, our woe, our bliss, our bane,
More hapless still are they who never felt thy pain!

All the masks dance round Cupid. Then enter a band of satyrs, who frighten away Love and his votaries; and conclude the scene, dancing in a grotesque manner.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—THE STREET BEFORE BASIL'S LODGINGS.

Enter ROSINBERG and two Officers.

Ros. (*speaking as he enters.*) Unless we find him quickly, all is lost.

1st Off. His very guards, methinks, have left their post
To join the mutiny.

Ros. (*knocking very loud.*) Holla! who's there within? confound this door!
It will not yield. O for a giant's strength!
Holla, holla, within! will no one hear?

Enter a Porter from the house.

Ros. (*eagerly to the Porter.*) Is he return'd? is he return'd not yet!
Thy face doth tell me so.

Port. Not yet, my Lord.

Ros. Then let him ne'er return!——
Tumult, disgrace, and ruin have their way!
I'll search for him no more.

Port. He hath been absent all the night, my lord.

Ros. I know he hath.

2d Off. And yet 'tis possible
He may have enter'd by the secret door;
And now perhaps, in deepest sleep entranc'd,
Is dead to ev'ry sound.

(Ros. *without speaking, rushes into the house and the rest follow him.*)

Enter BASIL.

Bas. The blue air of the morning pinches keenly.
Beneath her window all the chilly night,
I felt it not. Ah! night has been my day;
And the pale lamp which from her chamber gleam'd
Has to the breeze a warmer temper lent
Than the red burning east.

Re-enter ROSINBERG, &c. from the house.

Ros. Himself! himself! He's here! he's here! O Basil!
What friend at such a time could lead thee forth?

Bas. What is the matter which disturbs you thus?

Ros. Matter that would a wiser man disturb.
Treason's abroad: thy men have mutinied.

Bas. It is not so; thy wits have mutinied,
And left their sober station in thy brain.

1st Off. Indeed, my lord, he speaks in sober earnest.
Some secret enemies have been employ'd
To fill your troops with strange imaginations.
As tho' their gen'ral would, for selfish gain,
Their gen'rous valour urge to des'prate deeds.
All to a man assembled on the ramparts,
Now threaten vengeance, and refuse to march.

Bas. What! think they vilely of me? threaten too!
O! most ungen'rous, most unmanly thought!
Didst thou attempt (*to Ros.*) to reason with their folly?
Folly it is; baseness it cannot be.

Ros. Yes, truly, I did reason with a storm,
And bid it cease to rage.——
Their eyes look fire on him who questions them:
The hollow murmurs of their mutter'd wrath
Sound dreadful thro' the dark extended ranks,
Like subterraneous grumblings of an earthquake.
The vengeful hurricane
Does not with such fantastick writhings toss
The wood's green boughs, as does convulsive rage
Their forms with frantic gestures agitate.
Around the chief of hell such legions throng'd
To bring back curse and discord on creation.

Bas. Nay, they are men, altho' impassion'd ones.
I'll go to them—

Ros. And we will stand by thee.
My sword is thine against ten thousand strong,
If it should come to this.

Bas. No, never, never!
There is no mean: I with my soldiers must
Or their commander or their victim prove.
But are my officers all staunch and faithful?

Ros. All but that devil, Frederick——
He, disappointed, left his former corps,
Where he, in truth, had been too long neglected,
Thinking he should all on the sudden rise,
From Basil's well-known love of valiant men;
And now, because it still must be deferr'd,
He thinks you seek from envy to depress him,
And burns to be reveng'd.

Bas. Well, well——This grieves me too—
But let us go.

SCENE II.—THE RAMPARTS OF THE TOWN.

The Soldiers are discovered, drawn up in a disorderly manner, hollaing and speaking big, and clashing their arms tumultuously.

1st Sol. No, comrade, no; hell gape and swallow me,
If I do budge for such most dev'lish orders!

2d Sol. Huzza! brave comrads! Who says otherwise?

3d Sol. No one, huzza! confound all treach'rous leaders!

(*The soldiers huzza and clash their arms.*)

5th Sol. Heav'n dart its fiery lightning on his head!
We're men, we are not cattle to be slaughter'd!

2d Sol. They who do long to caper high in air,
Into a thousand bloody fragments blown,
May follow our brave gen'ral.

1st Sol. Curse his name!
I've fought for him till my strain'd nerves have crack'd!

2d Sol. We will command ourselves: for Milan, comrades.

5th Sol. Ay, ay, for Milan, valiant hearts, huzza.

(*All the Soldiers cast up their caps in the air and huzza.*)

2d Sol. Yes, comrades, tempting booty waits us there,
And easy service: keep good hearts, my soldiers!
The gen'ral comes, good hearts! no flinching boys!
Look bold and fiercely: we're the masters now

(*They all clash their arms and put on a fierce threatening aspect to receive their general, who now enters, followed by* Rosinburg *and* Officers. Basil *walks close along the front ranks of the Soldiers, looking at them very steadfastly; then retires a few paces back and raising his arm, speaks with a very full loud voice.*)

Bas. How is it, soldiers, that I see you thus
Assembled here unsummon'd by command?

(*A confused murmur is heard amongst the Soldiers; some of them call out.*)

But we ourselves command: we wait no orders.

(*A confused noise of voices is heard, and one louder than the rest calls out*)

Must we be butcher'd for that we are brave?

(*A loud clamour and clashing of arms, then several voices call out.*)

Damn hidden treach'ry! we defy thy orders.
Fred'rick shall lead us now————

(*Others call out*)

We'll march where'er we list, for Milan march.

Bas. (*waving his hand, and beckoning them to be silent, speaks with a very loud voice.*)
Yes, march where'er ye list: for Milan march.

Sol. Hear him, hear him!

(*The murmur ceases—a short pause.*)

Bas. Yes, march where'er ye list; for Milan march:
But as banditti, not as soldiers go;
For on this spot of earth I will disband,
And take from you the rank and name of soldiers.

(*A great clamour amongst the ranks—some call out*)

What wear we arms for?

(*Others call out*)

No, he dares not do it.

(*One voice very loud*)

Disband us at thy peril, treach'rous Basil!

(*Several of the Soldiers brandish their arms, and threaten to attack him; the Officers gather round* Basil, *and draw their swords to defend him.*)

Bas. Put up your swords, my friends, it must not be.
I thank your zeal, I'll deal with them alone.

Ros. What, shall we calmly stand and see thee butchered?

Bas. (*very earnestly.*) Put up, my friends. (*Officers still persist.*) What! are you rebels too?
Will no one here his gen'ral's voice obey?
I do command you to put up your swords.
Retire, and at a distance wait th' event.
Obey, or henceforth be no friends of mine.

(*Officers retire, very unwillingly.* Basil *waves them off with his hand till they are all gone, then walks up to the front of his Soldiers, who still hold themselves in a threatening posture.*)

Soldiers! we've fought together in the field,
And bravely fought: i' the face of horrid death,
At honour's call, I've led you dauntless on;
Nor do I know the man of all your bands,
That ever poorly from the trial shrunk,
Or yielded to the foe contended space.
Am I the meanest then of all my troops,
That thus ye think, with base unmanly threats,
To move me now? Put up those paltry weapons;
They edgeless are to him who fears them not;
Rocks have been shaken from the solid base;
But what shall move a firm and dauntless mind?

Put up your swords, or dare the threaten'd deed—
Obey, or murder me.————
(*A confused murmur—some of the soldiers call out*)
March us to Milan, and we will obey thee.
(*Others call out*)
Ay, march us there, and be our leader still.
Bas. Nay, if I am your leader, I'll command ye;
And where I do command, there shall you go,
But not to Milan. No, nor shall you deviate
E'en half a furlong from your destin'd way,
To seize the golden booty of the east.
Think not to gain, or temporise with me;
For should I this day's mutiny survive,
Much as I've lov'd you, soldiers, ye shall find me
Still more relentless in pursuit of vengeance;
Tremendous, cruel, military vengeance.
There is no mean—a desperate game ye play;
Therefore, I say, obey, or murder me.
Do as ye will, but do it manfully.
He is a coward who doth threaten me:
The man who slays me, but an angry soldier;
Acting in passion, like the frantick son,
Who struck his sire and wept.
(*Soldiers call out*) It was thyself who sought to murder us.
1st Sol. You have unto the Emp'rour pledg'd your faith,
To lead us foremost in all desp'rate service:
You have agreed to sell your soldiers' blood,
And we have shed our dearest blood for you.
Bas. Hear me, my soldiers——
2d Sol. No, hear him not, he means to cozen you.
Fred'rick will do you right———
(*Endeavouring to stir up a noise and confusion amongst them.*)
Bas. What cursed fiend art thou, cast out from hell
To spirit up rebellion? damned villain!
(*Seizes upon 2nd soldier, drags him out from the ranks, and wrests his arms from him; then takes a pistol from his side, and holds it to his head.*)
Stand there, damn'd meddling villain, and be silent;
For if thou utt'rest but a single word,
A cough or hem, to cross me in my speech,
I'll send thy cursed spirit from the earth,
To bellow with the damn'd!
(*The soldiers keep a dead silence---after a pause,* Basil *resumes his speech.*)
Listen to me, my soldiers.——
You say that I am to the emp'rour pledg'd
To lead you foremost in all desp'rate service,
For now you call it not the path of glory;
And if in this I have offended you,
I do indeed repent me of the crime.
But new from battles, where my native troops
So bravely fought, I felt me proud at heart,
And boasted of you, boasted foolishly.
I said, fair glory's palm ye would not yield
To e'er the bravest legion train'd to arms.
I swore the meanest man of all my troops
Would never shrink before an armed host,
If honour bade him stand. My royal master
Smil'd at the ardour of my heedless words,
And promis'd, when occasion claim'd our arms,
To put them to the proof.
But ye do peace, and ease, and booty love,
Safe and ignoble service—be it so—
Forgive me that I did mistake you thus,
But do not earn with savage mutiny,
Your own destruction. We'll for Pavia march,
To join the royal army near its walls;
And there with blushing forehead will I plead,
That ye are men with warlike service worn,
Requiring ease and rest. Some other chief,
Whose cold blood boils not at the trumpet's sound,
Will in your rearward station head you then,
And so, my friends, we'll part. As for myself,
A volunteer, unheeded in the ranks,
I'll rather fight, with brave men for my fellows,
Than be the leader of a sordid band.
(*A great murmur rises amongst the ranks, soldiers call out*)
We will not part! no, no, we will not part!
(*All call out together*)
We will not part! be thou our gen'ral still.
Bas. How can I be your gen'ral? ye obey
As caprice moves you; I must be obey'd
As honest men against themselves perform
A sacred oath.—
Some other chief will more indulgent prove—
You're weary grown—I've been too hard a master—
Soldiers. Thyself, and only thee, will we obey.
Bas. But if you follow me, yourselves ye pledge
Unto no easy service:—hardships, toils,
The hottest dangers of most dreadful fight
Will be your portion; and when all is o'er,
Each, like his gen'ral, must contented be
Home to return again, a poor brave soldier.
How say ye now? I spread no tempting lure—
A better fate than this, I promise none.
Soldiers. We'll follow Basil.
Bas. What token of obedience will ye give?
(*A deep pause.*)
Soldiers, lay down your arms!
(*They all lay down their arms.*)
If any here are weary of the service,
Now let them quit the ranks, and they shall have
A free discharge, and passport to their homes;
And from my scanty fortune I'll make good
The well-earn'd pay their royal master owes them.
Let those who follow me their arms resume.
(*They all resume their arms.*)
(*Basil holding up his hands.*) High heaven be prais'd!
I had been griev'd to part with you, my soldiers,
Here is a letter from my gracious master,

With offers of preferment in the north,
Most high preferment, which I did refuse,
For that I would not leave my gallant troops.
(*Takes out a letter, and throws it amongst them.*)
A great commotion amongst the soldiers; many of them quit their ranks, and crowd about him, calling out)
Our gallant gen'ral!
(*Others call out*)
We'll spend our hearts' blood for thee, noble Basil!
Bas. And so you thought me false? this bites to the quick!
My soldiers thought me false!
(*They all quit their ranks, and crowd eagerly around him.* Basil, *waving them off with his hands.*)
Away, away, you have disgusted me!
(*Soldiers retire to their ranks.*)
'Tis well—retire, and hold yourselves prepar'd
To march upon command, nor meet again
Till you are summon'd by the beat of drum.
Some secret enemy has tamper'd with you,
For yet I will not think that in these ranks
There moves a man who wears a traitor's heart.
(*The soldiers begin to march off, and musick strikes up.*)
Bas. (*holding up his hand.*) Cease, cease, triumphant sounds,
Which our brave fathers, men without reproach,
Rais'd in the hour of triumph! but this hour
To us no glory brings—
Then silent be your march—ere that again
Our steps to glorious strains like these shall move,
A day of battle o'er our heads must pass,
And blood be shed to wash out this days' stain.
[Exeunt *soldiers, silent and dejected*

Enter Fredrick, who starts back on seeing Basil alone.

Bas. Advance, lieutenant; wherefore shrink ye back?
I've even seen you bear your head erect,
And front your man tho' arm'd with frowning death.
Have you done aught the valiant should not do?
I fear you have. (Fred *looks confused.*
With secret art, and false insinuation,
The simple untaught soldiers to seduce
From their sworn duty, might become the base,
Become the coward well; but O! what villain
Had the dark pow'r t' engage thy valiant worth
In such a work as this!
Fred. Is Basil, then, so lavish of his praise
On a neglected pitiful subaltern?
It were a libel on his royal master;
A foul reproach upon fair fortune cast,
To call me valiant:
And surely he has been too much their debtor
To mean them this rebuke.
Bas. Is nature then so sparing of her gifts,
That it is wonderful when they are found
Where fortune smiles not?
Thou art by nature brave, and so am I;
But in those distant ranks moves there not one (*Pointing off the stage.*
Of high ennobled soul, by nature form'd
A hero and commander, who will yet
In his untrophied grave forgotten lie
With meaner men? I dare be sworn there does.
Fred. What need of words? I crave of thee no favour,
I have offended 'gainst arm'd law, offended,
And shrink not from my doom.
Bas. I know thee well, I know thou fear'st not death;
On scaffold or in field with dauntless breast
Thou wilt engage him: and, if thy proud soul,
In sullen obstinacy, scorns all grace,
E'en be it so. But if with manly gratitude
Thou truly canst receive a brave man's pardon,
Thou hast it freely.
Fred. It must not be. I've been thine enemy—
I've been unjust to thee—
Bas. I know thou hast;
But thou art brave, and I forgive thee all.
Fred. My lord! my gen'ral! Oh I cannot speak!
I cannot live and be the wretch I am.
Bas. But thou canst live and be an honest man
From errour turn'd,—canst live and be my friend.
(*Raising* Fred. *from the ground.*)
Forbear, forbear! see where our friends advance:
They must not think thee suing for a pardon;
That would disgrace us both. Yet, ere they come,
Tell me, if that thou mayst with honour tell,
What did seduce thee from thy loyal faith?
Fred. No cunning traitor did my faith attempt,
For then I had withstood him: but of late,
I know not how—a bad and restless spirit
Has work'd within my breast, and made me wretched.
I've lent mine ear to foolish idle tales,
Of very zealous, tho' but recent friends.
Bas. Softly, our friends approach—of this again. [Exeunt.

Scene III.—An apartment in Basil's lodgings.

Enter Basil and Rosinberg.

Ros. Thank heaven I am now alone with thee.
Last night I sought thee with an anxious mind,
And curs'd thine ill-tim'd absence.—
There 's treason in this most deceitful court,

Against thee plotting, and this morning's tumult
Hath been its damn'd effect.

Bas. Nay, nay, my friend!
The nature of man's mind too well thou know'st,
To judge as vulgar hoodwink'd statesmen do;
Who, ever with their own poor wiles misled,
Believe each popular tumult or commotion
Must be the work of deep-laid policy.
Poor, mean, mechanick souls, who little know
A few short words of energetick force,
Some powerful passion on the sudden rous'd,
The animating sight of something noble,
Some fond trait of the mem'ry finely wak'd,
A sound, a simple song without design,
In revolutions, tumults, wars, rebellions,
All grand events, have oft effected more
Than deepest cunning of their paltry art.
Some drunken soldier, eloquent with wine,
Who loves not fighting, hath harangued his mates,
For they in truth some hardships have endur'd:
Wherefore in this should we suspect the court?

Ros. Ah! there is something, friend, in Mantua's court,
Will make the blackest trait of barefac'd treason,
Seem fair and guiltless to thy partial eye.

Bas. Nay, 'tis a weakness in thee, Rosinberg,
Which makes thy mind so jealous and distrustful.
Why should the duke be false?

Ros. Because he is a double, crafty prince—
Because I've heard it rumour'd secretly,
That he in some dark treaty is engag'd,
E'en with our master's enemy the Frank.

Bas. And so thou think'st—

Ros. Nay, hear me to the end.
Last night that good and honourable dame,
Noble Albini, with most friendly art,
From the gay clam'rous throng my steps beguil'd,
Unmask'd before me, and with earnest grace
Entreated me, if I were Basil's friend,
To tell him hidden danger waits him here,
And warn him earnestly this court to leave.
She said she lov'd thee much; and hadst thou seen
How anxiously she urg'd—

Bas. (*interrupting him.*) By heav'n and earth,
There is a ray of light breaks thro' thy tale,
And I could leap like madmen in their freaks,
So blessed is the gleam! Ah! no, no, no!
It cannot be! alas, it cannot be!
Yet didst thou say she urg'd it earnestly?
She is a woman, who avoids all share
In secret politicks; one only charge
Her int'rest claims, Victoria's guardian friend—
And she would have me hence—it must be so.
O! would it were! how saidst thou, gentle Rosinberg?
She urg'd it earnestly—how did she urge it?
Nay, pri'thee do not stare upon me thus,
But tell me all her words! What said she?

Ros. O Basil! I could laugh to see thy folly,
But that thy weakness doth provoke me so.
Most admirable, brave, determin'd man!
So well, so lately tried, what art thou now?
A vain deceitful thought transports thee thus.
Thinkst thou—

Bas. I will not tell thee what I think.

Ros. But I can guess it well, and it deceives thee.
Leave this detested place, this fatal court,
Where dark deceitful cunning plots thy ruin.
A soldier's duty calls thee loudly hence.
The time is critical. How wilt thou feel
When they shall tell these tidings in thine ear,
That brave Piscaro, and his royal troops,
Our valiant fellows, have the en'my fought,
Whilst we, so near at hand, lay loit'ring here?

Bas. Thou dost disturb thy brain with fancied fears.
Our fortunes rest not on a point so nice,
That one short day should be of all this moment;
And yet this one short day will be to me
Worth years of other time.

Ros. Nay, rather say,
A day to darken all thy days beside.
Confound the fatal beauty of that woman,
Which hath bewitch'd thee so!

Bas. 'Tis most ungen'rous
To push me thus with rough unsparing hand,
Where but the slightest touch is felt so dearly.
It is unfriendly.

Ros. God knows my heart! I would not give thee pain;
But it disturbs me, Basil, vexes me,
To see thee so enthralled by a women.
If she is fair, others are fair as she.
Some other face will like emotions raise,
When thou canst better play a lover's part:
But for the present,—fye upon it, Basil!

Bas. What, is it possible thou hast beheld,
Hast tarried by her too, her converse shar'd,
Yet talk'st as tho' she were a common fair one,
Such as a man may fancy and forget?
Thou art not, sure, so dull and brutish grown:
It is not so; thou dost belie thy thoughts,
And vainly try'st to gain me with the cheat.

Ros. So thinks each lover of the maid he loves,
Yet, in their lives, some many maidens love.
Fye on it! leave this town, and be a soldier!

Bas. Have done, have done! why dost thou bate me thus?
Thy words become disgusting to me, Rosinberg.
What claim hast thou my actions to controul?
I'll Mantua leave when it is fit I should.

Ros. Then, 'faith! 'tis fitting thou shouldst leave it now;
Ay, on the instant. Is't not desperation
To stay, and hazard ruin on thy fame,
Tho' yet uncheer'd e'en by that tempting lure,
No lover breathes without? thou hast no hope.

Bas. What, dost thou mean—curse o[illegible] paltry thought!

That I should count and bargain with my heart,
Upon the chances of unstinted favour,
As little souls their base-bred fancies feed?
O! were I conscious that within her breast
I held some portion of her dear regard,
Tho' pent for life within a prison's walls,
Where thro' my grate I yet might sometimes see
E'en but her shadow sporting in the sun;
Tho' plac'd by fate where some obstructing bound,
Some deep impassable between us roll'd,
And I might yet from some high tow'ring cliff
Perceive her distant mansion from afar,
Or mark its blue smoke rising eve and morn;
Nay, tho' within the circle of the moon
Some spell did fix her, never to return,
And I might wander in the hours of night,
And upward turn my ever-gazing eye,
Fondly to mark upon its varied disk
Some little spot that might her dwelling be;
My fond, my fixed heart would still adore,
And own no other love. Away, away!
How canst thou say to one who loves like me,
Thou hast no hope?

Ros. But with such hope, my friend, how stand thy fears?
Are they so well refin'd? how wilt thou bear
Ere long to hear, that some high-favour'd prince
Has won her heart, her hand, has married her?
Tho' now unshackled, will it always be?

Bas. By heav'n thou dost contrive but to torment,
And hast a pleasure in the pain thou giv'st!
There is malignity in what thou say'st.

Ros. No, not malignity, but kindness, Basil,
That fain would save thee from the yawning gulf,
To which blind passion guides thy heedless steps.

Bas. Go, rather save thyself
From the weak passion which has seiz'd thy breast,
T' assume authority with sage-like brow,
And shape my actions by thine own caprice.
I can direct myself.

Ros. Yes, do thyself,
And let no artful woman do it for thee.

Bas. I scorn thy thought: it is beneath my scorn:
It is of meanness sprung—an artful woman!
O! she has all the loveliness of heav'n
And all its goodness to!

Ros. I mean not to impute dishonest arts,
I mean not to impute—

Bas. No 'faith thou canst not.

Ros. What, can I not? their arts all women have.
But now of this no more; it moves thee greatly.
Yet once again, as a most loving friend,
Let me conjure thee, if thou prizest honour,
A soldier's fair repute, a hero's fame,
What noble spirits love, and well I know
Full dearly dost thou prize them, leave this place,
And give thy soldiers orders for the march.

Bas. Nay, since thou must assume it o'er me thus,
Be gen'ral, and command my soldiers too.

Ros. What, hath this passion in so short a space,
O! curses on it! so far chang'd thee, Basil,
That thou dost take with such ungentle warmth,
The kindly freedom of thine ancient friend?
Methinks the beauty of a thousand maids
Would not have mov'd me thus to treat my friend,
My best, mine earliest friend!

Bas. Say kinsman rather; chance has link'd us so:
Our blood is near, our hearts are sever'd far;
No act of choice did e'er unite our souls.
Men most unlike we are; our thoughts unlike;
My breast disowns thee—thou'rt no friend of mine.

Ros. Ah! have I then so long, so dearly lov'd thee;
So often, with an elder brother's care,
Thy childish rambles tended, shar'd thy sports;
Fill'd up by stealth thy weary school-boy's task;
Taught thy young arms thine earliest feats of strength;
With boastful pride thine early rise beheld
In glory's paths, contented then to fill
A second place, so I might serve with thee;
And say'st thou now, I am no friend of thine?
Well, be it so; I am thy kinsman then,
And by that title will I save thy name,
From danger of disgrace. Indulge thy will.
I'll lay me down and feign that I am sick:
And yet I shall not feign—I shall not feign;
For thy unkindness makes me so indeed.
It will be said that Basil tarried here
To save his friend, for so they'll call me still;
Nor will dishonour fall upon thy name
For such a kindly deed.—

(Basil *walks up and down in great agitation, then stops, covers his face with his hands, and seems to be overcome.* Rosinberg *looks at him earnestly.*)

O blessed heav'n he weeps!

(*Runs up to him, and catches him in his arms.*)
O Basil! I have been too hard upon thee.
And is it possible I've mov'd thee thus?

Bas. (*in a convulsed broken voice.*) I will renounce—I'll leave—

Ros. What says my Basil?

Bas. I'll Mantua leave—I'll leave this seat of bliss—
This lovely woman—tear my heart in twain—
Cast off at once my little span of joy—
Be wretched—miserable—whate'er thou wilt—
Dost thou forgive me?

Ros. O my friend! my friend!
I love thee now more than I ever lov'd thee.
I must be cruel to thee to be kind:

Each pang I see thee feel strikes thro' my heart;
Then spare us both, call up thy noble spirit,
And meet the blow at once. Thy troops are ready—
Let us depart, nor lose another hour.
(Basil *shrinks from his arms, and looks at him with somewhat of an upbraiding, at the same time a sorrowful look.*)

Bas. Nay, put me not to death upon the instant;
I'll see her once again, and then depart.

Ros. See her but once again, and thou art ruin'd!
It must not be—if thou regardest me—

Bas. Well then, it shall not be. Thou hast no mercy!

Ros. Ah! thou wilt bless me all thine after-life
For what now seems to thee so merciless.

Bas. (*sitting down very dejectedly.*) Mine after-life! what is mine after-life?
My day is clos'd! the gloom of night is come!
A hopeless darkness settles o'er my fate.
I've seen the last look of her heavenly eyes;
I've heard the last sounds of her blessed voice;
I've seen her fair form from my sight depart:
My doom is clos'd!

Ros. (*hanging over him with pity and affection.*) Alas! my friend!

Bas. In all her lovely grace she disappear'd,
Ah! little thought I never to return!

Ros. Why so desponding? think of warlike glory.
The fields of fair renown are still before thee;
Who would not burn such noble fame to earn?

Bas. What now are arms, or fair renown to me?
Strive for it those who will—and yet, a while,
Welcome rough war; with all thy scenes of blood; (*starting from his seat.*)
Thy roaring thunders, and thy clashing steel!
Welcome once more! what have I now to do
But play the brave man o'er again, and die?

Enter Isabella.

Isab. (*to* Bas.) My princess bids me greet you, noble Count:—

Bas. (*starting.*) What dost thou say?

Ros. Damn this untimely message!

Isab. The princess bids me greet you, noble Count:
In the cool grove, hard by the southern gate
She with her train—

Bas. What, she indeed, herself?

Isab. Herself, my lord, and she requests to see you.

Bas. Thank heav'n for this! I will be there anon.

Ros. (*taking hold of him.*) Stay, stay, and do not be a madman still.

Bas. Let go thy hold: what, must I be a brute,
A very brute to please thee? no, by heav'n
(*Breaks from him, and* Exit.

Ros. (*striking his forehead.*) All lost again! ill fortune light upon her!
(*Turning eagerly to* Isab.)
And so thy virtuous mistress sends thee here
To make appointments, honourable dame?

Isab. Not so, my lord, you must not call it so:
The court will hunt to-morrow, and Victoria
Would have your noble gen'ral of her train,

Ros. Confound these women, and their artful snares,
Since men will be such fools!

Isab. Yes, grumble at our empire as you will—

Ros. What, boast ye of it? empire do ye call it?
It is your shame! a short-liv'd tyranny,
That ends at last in hatred and contempt.

Isab. Nay, but some women do so wisely rule,
Their subjects never from the yoke escape.

Ros. Some women do, but they are rarely found.
There is not one in all your paltry court
Hath wit enough for the ungen'rous task.
'Faith! of you all, not one, but brave Albini,
And she disdains it—Good be with you, lady!
(*Going.*)

Isab. O would I could but touch that stubborn heart!
How dearly should he pay for this hour's scorn! [Exeunt *severally.*

Scene IV. A summer apartment in the country, the windows of which look to a forest.

Enter Victoria in a hunting dress, followed by Albini and Isabella, speaking as they enter.

Vict. (*to* Alb.) And so you will not share our sport to-day?

Alb. My days of frolick should ere this be o'er,
But thou, my charge, has kept me youthful still.
I should most gladly go; but, since the dawn,
A heavy sickness hangs upon my heart;
I cannot hunt to-day.

Vict. I'll stay at home and nurse thee, dear Albini.

Alb. No, no, thou shalt not stay.

Vict. Nay, but I will.
I cannot follow to the cheerful horn
Whilst thou art sick at home.

Alb. Not very sick.
Rather than thou shouldst stay, my gentle child,
I'll mount my horse, and go e'en as I am.

Vict. Nay, then I'll go, and soon return again.
Meanwhile, do thou be careful of thyself.

Isab. Hark, Hark! the shrill horns call us to the field:
Your highness hears it? (*musick without.*)

Vict. Yes, my Isabella;

I hear it, and methinks e'en at the sound
I vault already on my leathern seat,
And feel the fiery steed beneath me shake
His mantled sides, and paw the fretted earth
Whilst I aloft, with gay equestrian grace,
The low salute of gallant lords return,
Who waiting round with eager watchful eye,
And reined steeds, the happy moments seize
O! didst thou never hear, my Isabell,
How nobly Basil in the field becomes
His fiery courser's back?

Isab. They say most gracefully.

Alb. What, is the valiant Count not yet departed?

Vict. You would not have our gallant Basil go
When I have bid him stay? not so, Albini.

Alb. Fye! reigns that spirit still so strongly in thee,
Which vainly covets all men's admiration,
And is to others cause of cruel pain?
O! would thou couldst subdue it!

Vict. My gentle friend, thou shouldst not be severe:
For now in truth I love not admiration
As I was wont to do; in truth I do not.
But yet, this once my woman's heart excuse,
For there is something strange in this man's love,
I never met before, and I must prove it.

Alb. Well, prove it then, be stricken too thyself,
And bid sweet peace of mind a sad farewell.

Vict. O no! that will not be! 'twill peace restore:
For after this, all folly of the kind
Will quite insipid and disgusting seem;
And so I shall become a prudent maid,
And passing wise at last.
(*musick heard without.*)
Hark, hark! again!
All good be with you! I'll return ere long.
[EXEUNT Victoria *and* Isabella.

Alb. (*sola.*) Ay, go, and ev'ry blessing with thee go,
My most tormenting, and most pleasing charge!
Like vapour, from the mountain stream art thou,
Which lightly rises on the morning air,
And shifts its fleeting form with ev'ry breeze,
For ever varying, and for ever graceful.
Endearing, gen'rous, bountiful and kind;
Vain, fanciful, and fond of worthless praise;
Courteous and gentle, proud and magnificent:
And yet these adverse qualities in thee,
No dissonance, nor striking contrast make;
For still thy good and amiable gifts
The sober dignity of virtue wear not,
And such a 'witching mien thy follies shew,
They make a very idiot of reproof,
And smile it to disgrace.—
What shall I do with thee?—It grieves me much
To hear Count Basil is not yet departed.
When from the chace he comes, I'll watch his steps,
And speak to him myself.—
O! I could hate her for that poor ambition
Which silly adoration only claims,
But that I well remember, in my youth
I felt the like—I did not feel it long:
I tore it soon, indignant from my breast,
As that which did degrade a noble mind.
[EXIT.

SCENE V.—A VERY BEAUTIFUL GROVE IN THE FOREST.

Musick and horns heard afar off, whilst huntsmen and dogs appear passing over the stage, at a great distance. Enter VICTORIA and BASIL, as if just alighted from their horses.

Vict. (*speaking to attendants without.*) Lead on our horses to the further grove,
And wait us there.—
(*to* Bas.) This spot so pleasing, and so fragrant is,
'Twere sacrilege with horses' hoofs to wear
Its velvet turf, where little elfins dance,
And fairies sport beneath the summer's moon;
I love to tread upon it.

Bas. O! I would quit the chariot of a god
For such delightful footing!

Vict. I love this spot.

Bas. It is a spot where one would live and die.

Vict. See, thro' the twisted boughs of those high elms,
The sun-beams on the bright'ning foliage play,
And tinge the scaled bark with ruddy brown.
Is it not beautiful?

Bas. As tho' an angel, in his upward flight,
Had left his mantle floating in mid air.

Vict. Still most unlike a garment; small and sever'd:
(*Turning round, and perceiving that he is gazing at her.*)
But thou regard'st them not.

Bas. Ah! what should I regard, where should I gaze?
For in that far-shot glance, so keenly wak'd,
That sweetly rising smile of admiration,
Far better do I learn how fair heav'n is,
Than if I gaz'd upon the blue serene.

Vict. Remember you have promis'd, gentle Count,
No more to vex me with such foolish words.

Bas. Ah! wherefore should my tongue alone be mute?
When every look and every motion tell,
So plainly tell, and will not be forbid,
That I adore thee, love thee, worship thee!
(Victoria *looks haughty and displeased.*)
Ah! pardon me, I know not what I say.
Ah! frown not thus! I cannot see thee frown.
I'll do whate'er thou wilt, I will be silent:
But O! a reined tongue, and bursting heart,
Are hard at once to bear.—Wilt thou forgive me?

Vict. We'll think no more of it; we'll quit this spot;
I do repent me that I led thee here.
But 'twas the fav'rite path of a dear friend:
Here many a time we wander'd, arm in arm:

We lov'd this grove, and now that he is absent,
I love to haunt it still. (Basil *starts*.

Bas. His fav'rite path—a friend—here arm in arm—
(*Clasping his hands, and raising them to his head.*)
Then there is such a one!
(*Drooping his head, and looking distractedly upon the ground.*)
I dream'd not of it.

Vict. (*pretending not to see him.*) That little lane, with woodbine all o'ergrown,
He lov'd so well! it is a fragrant path,
Is it not, Count?

Bas. It is a gloomy one!

Vict. I have, my lord, been wont to think it cheerful.

Bas. I thought your highness meant to leave this spot?

Vict. I do, and by this lane we'll take our way;
For here he often walk'd with saunt'ring pace,
And listen'd to the woodlark's evening song.

Bas. What, must I on his very footsteps go?
Accursed be the ground on which he trod!

Vict. And is Count Basil so uncourtly grown,
That he would curse my brother to my face?

Bas. Your brother! gracious God, is it your brother?
That dear, that loving friend of whom you spoke,
Is he indeed your brother?

Vict. He is indeed, my lord.

Bas. Then heaven bless him! all good angels bless him!
I could weep o'er him now, shed blood for him!
I could—O what a foolish heart have I!
Walks up and down with a hurried step, tossing about his arms in transport; then stops short and runs up to Victoria.)
Is it indeed your brother?

Vict. It is indeed: what thoughts disturb'd thee so?

Bas. I will not tell thee; foolish thoughts they were.
Heav'n bless your brother!

Vict. Ay, heav'n bless him too!
I have but him; would I had two brave brothers,
And thou wert one of them!

Bas. I would fly from thee to earth's utmost bounds,
Were I thy brother—
And yet methinks, I would I had a sister.

Vict. And wherefore would ye so?

Bas. To place her near thee,
The soft companion of thy hours to prove,
And, when far distant, sometimes talk of me.
Thou couldst not chide a gentle sister's cares.
Perhaps, when rumour from the distant war,
Uncertain tales of dreadful slaughter bore,
Thou'dst see the tear hang on her pale wan cheek,
And kindly say, How does it fare with Basil?

Vict. No more of this—indeed there must no more.
A friend's remembrance I will ever bear thee.
But see where Isabella this way comes:
I had a wish to speak with her alone;
Attend us here, for soon will we return,
And then take horse again. [EXIT.

Bas. (*looking after her for some time.*) See with what graceful steps she moves along,
Her lovely form, in ev'ry action lovely!
If but the wind her ruffled garment raise,
It twists it into some light pretty fold,
Which adds new grace. Or should some small mishap,
Some tangled branch, her fair attire derange,
What would in others strange, or awkward seem,
But lends to her some wild bewitching charm.
See, yonder does she raise her lovely arm
To pluck the dangling hedge-flow'r as she goes;
And now she turns her head as tho' she view'd
The distant landscape; now methinks she walks
With doubtful ling'ring steps—will she look back?
Ah no! yon thicket hides her from my sight.
Bless'd are the eyes that may behold her still,
Nor dread that ev'ry look shall be the last!
And yet she said she would remember me.
I will believe it: Ah! I must believe it,
Or be the saddest soul that sees the light!
But lo, a messenger, and from the army!
He brings me tidings; grant they may be good!
Till now I never fear'd what man might utter;
I dread his tale, God grant it may be good!

Enter MESSENGER.

From the army?

Mess. Yes, my lord.

Bas. What tidings brings't thou?

Mess. Th' Imperial army, under brave Piscaro,
Have beat the enemy near Pavia's walls.

Bas. Ha! have they fought? and is the battle o'er?

Mess. Yes, conquer'd ta'en the French king prisoner,
Who, like a noble, gallant gentleman,
Fought to the last, nor yielded up his sword
Till, being one amidst surrounding foes,
His arm could do no more.

Bas. What dost thou say? who is made pris'ner?
What king did fight so well?

Mess. The king of France.

Bas. Thou saidst—thy words do ring so in mine ears,
I cannot catch their sense—the battle's o'er?

Mess. It is my lord. Piscaro staid your coming,
But could no longer stay. His troops were bold,
Occasion press'd him, and they bravely fought—
They bravely fought, my lord!

Bas. I hear, I hear thee.
Accurs'd am I, that it should wring my heart

To hear they bravely fought!—
They bravely fought, whilst we lay ling'ring here.
O! what a fated blow to strike me thus!
Perdition! shame! disgrace! a damned blow!

Mess. Ten thousand of the enemy are slain;
We too have lost full many a gallant soul.
I view'd the closing armies from afar;
Their close pik'd ranks in goodly order spread,
Which seem'd, alas! when that the fight was o'er,
Like the wild marshes' crop of stately reeds,
Laid with the passing storm. But woe is me!
When to the field I came, what dismal sights!
What waste of life! what heaps of bleeding slain!

Bas. Would I were laid a red, disfigur'd corse,
Amid those heaps! they fought, and we were absent!
(*Walks about distractedly, then stops short.*)
Who sent thee here?

Mess. Piscaro sent me to inform Count Basil,
He needs not now his aid, and gives him leave
To march his tardy troops to distant quarters.

Bas. He says so, does he? well, it shall be so.
(*Tossing his arms distractedly.*)
I will to quarters, narrow quarters go,
Where voice of war shall rouse me forth no more. [Exit.

Mess. I'll follow after him; he is distracted:
And yet he looks so wild I dare not do it.

Enter Victoria as if frightened, followed by Isabella.

Vict. (*to* Isab.) Didst thou not mark him as he pass'd thee too?

Isab. I saw him pass, but with such hasty steps I had no time.

Vict. I met him with a wild disorder'd air,
In furious haste; he stopp'd distractedly,
And gaz'd upon me with a mournful look,
But pass'd away, and spoke not. Who art thou? (*To the Messenger.*)
I fear thou art a bearer of bad tidings.

Mess. No, rather good as I should deem it, madam,
Altho' unwelcome tidings to Count Basil.
Our army hath a glorious battle won;
Ten thousand French are slain, their monarch captive.

Vict. (*to Mess.*) Ah, there it is! he was not in the fight.
Run after him I pray—nay, do not so—
Run to his kinsman, good Count Rosinberg,
And bid him follow him—I pray thee run!

Mess. Nay, lady, by your leave, you seem not well:
I will conduct you hence, and then I'll go.

Vict. No, no, I'm well enough; I'm very well:
Go, hie thee hence, and do thine errand swiftly.
[Exit *Messenger.*
O what a wretch am I? I am to blame!
I only am to blame?

Isab. Nay, wherefore say so?
What have you done that others would not do?

Vict. What have I done? I've fool'd a noble heart—
I've wreck'd a brave man's honour!
[Exit *leaning upon* Isabella.

ACT V.

Scene I.—A DARK NIGHT; NO MOON, BUT A FEW STARS GLIMMERING; THE STAGE REPRESENTS (AS MUCH AS CAN BE DISCOVERED FOR THE DARKNESS) A CHURCH-YARD WITH PART OF A CHAPEL, AND A WING OF THE DUCAL PALACE ADJOINING TO IT.

Enter Basil with his hat off, his hair and his dress in disorder, stepping slowly, and stopping several times to listen, as if he was afraid of meeting any one.

Bas. No sound is here: man is at rest, and I
May near his habitations venture forth,
Like some unblessed creature of the night,
Who dares not meet his face.—Her window's dark;
No streaming light doth from her chamber beam,
That I once more may on her dwelling gaze,
And bless her still. All now is dark for me!
(*Pauses for some time, and looks upon the graves.*)
How happy are the dead, who quietly rest
Beneath these stones! each by his kindred laid,
Still in a hallow'd neighbourship with those,
Who when alive his social converse shar'd:
And now perhaps some dear surviving friend
Doth here at times the grateful visit pay,
Read with sad eyes his short memorial o'er,
And bless his mem'ry still!—
But I, like a vile outcast of my kind,
In some lone spot must lay m' unburied corse,
To rot above the earth; where, if perchance
The steps of human wand'rer e'er approach,
He'll stand aghast, and flee the horrid place,
With dark imaginations frightful made
The haunt of damned sprites. O cursed wretch!
I' the fair and honour'd field shouldst thou have died,
Where brave friends, proudly smiling thro' their tears,
Had pointed out the spot where Basil lay!
(*A light seen in* Victoria's *window.*)
But ha! the wonted, welcome light appears.
How bright within I see her chamber wall!
Athwart it too, a dark'ning shadow moves,
A slender woman's form: it is herself!
What means that motion of its clasped hands?
That drooping head? alas! is she in sorrow?
Alas! thou sweet enchantress of the mind,
Whose voice was gladness, and whose presence bliss,
Art thou unhappy too? I've brought thee woe;
It is for me thou weep'st. Ah! were it so,

Fall'n as I am, I yet could life endure,
In some dark den from human sight conceal'd,
So, that I sometimes from my haunt might steal,
To see and love thee still. No, no, poor wretch!
She weeps thy shame, she weeps, and scorns thee too.
She moves again; e'en darkly imag'd thus,
How lovely is that form!
(*Pauses, still looking at the window.*)
To be so near thee, and for ever parted!
For ever lost! what art thou now to me?
Shall the departed gaze on thee again?
Shall I glide past thee in the midnight hour,
Whilst thou perceiv'st it not, and think'st perhaps
'Tis but the mournful breeze that passes by?
(*Pauses again, and gazes at the window, till the light disappears.*)
'Tis gone, 'tis gone! these eyes have seen their last!
The last impression of her heavenly form:
The last sight of those walls wherein she lives:
The last blest ray of light from human dwelling.
I am no more a being of this world.
Farewell! farewell! all now is dark for me!
Come fated deed! come horrour and despair!
Here lies my dreadful way.

Enter GEOFFRY from behind a tomb.

Geof. O! stay, my gen'ral!
Bas. Art thou from the grave?
Geof. O my brave gen'ral! do you know me not?
I am old Geoffry, the old maimed soldier,
You did so nobly honour.
Bas. Then go thy way, for thou art honourable:
Thou hast no shame, thou need'st not seek the dark
Like fallen, fameless men. I pray thee go!
Geof. Nay, speak not thus, my noble general!
Ah! speak not thus! thou'rt brave, thou'rt honour'd still.
Thy soldier's fame is far too surely rais'd
To be o'erthrown with one unhappy chance.
I've heard of thy brave deeds with swelling heart,
And yet shall live to cast my cap in air,
At glorious tales of thee.—
Bas. Forbear, forbear! thy words but wring my soul.
Geof. O! pardon me! I am old maimed Geoffry.
O! do not go! I've but one hand to hold thee.
(*Laying hold of* Basil *as he attempts to go away.* Basil *stops, and looks around upon him with softness.*)
Bas. Two would not hold so well, old honour'd vet'ran!
What wouldst thou have me do?
Geof. Return, my lord; for love of blessed heaven,
Seek not such desperate ways! where would you go?
Bas. Does Geoffry ask where should a soldier go
To hide disgrace? there is no place but one.
(*Struggling to get free.*)
Let go thy foolish hold, and force me not
To do some violence to thy hoary head—
What, wilt thou not? nay, then it must be so.
(*Breaks violently from him, and* EXIT.)
Geof. Curs'd feeble hand! he's gone to seek perdition!
I cannot run. Where is that stupid hind?
He should have met me here. Holla, Fernando!

Enter FERNANDO.

We've lost him, he is gone, he's broke from me!
Did I not bid thee meet me early here,
For that he has been known to haunt this place?
Fer. Which way has he gone?
Geof. Towards the forest, if I guess aright.
But do thou run with speed to Rosinberg,
And he will follow him; run swiftly, man!
[EXEUNT.

SCENE II.—A WOOD, WILD AND SAVAGE; AN ENTRY TO A CAVE, VERY MUCH TANGLED WITH BRUSHWOOD, IS SEEN IN THE BACKGROUND. THE TIME REPRESENTS THE DAWN OF MORNING. BASIL IS DISCOVERED STANDING NEAR THE FRONT OF THE STAGE, IN A THOUGHTFUL POSTURE, WITH A COUPLE OF PISTOLS LAID BY HIM ON A PIECE OF PROJECTING ROCK; HE PAUSES FOR SOME TIME.

Bas. (*alone.*) What shall I be some few short moments hence?
Why ask I now? who from the dead will rise
To tell me of that awful state unknown?
But be it what it may, or bliss, or torment,
Annihilation, dark and endless rest,
Or some dread thing, man's wildest range o thought
Hath never yet conceiv'd, that change I'll dare
Which makes me anything but what I am.
I can bear scorpions' stings, tread fields of fire,
In frozen gulfs of cold eternal lie,
Be toss'd aloft through tracks of endless void,
But cannot live in shame—(*Pauses.*) O impious thought!
Will the great God of mercy, mercy have
On all but those who are most miserable?
Will he not punish with a pitying hand
The poor, fall'n, froward child? (*Pauses.*)
And shall I then against his will offend,
Because he is most good and merciful?
O! horrid baseness! what, what shall I do?
I'll think no more—it turns my dizzy brain—
It is too late to think—what must be, must be—
I cannot live, therefore I needs must die.

(*Takes up the pistols, and walks up and down, looking wildly around him, then discovering the cave's mouth.*)
Here is an entry to some darksome cave,
Where an uncoffin'd corse may rest in peace,
And hide its foul corruption from the earth.
The threshold is unmark'd by mortal foot.
I'll do it here.
(*Enters the cave and* Exit; *a deep silence; then the report of a pistol is heard from the cave, and soon after, Enter* Rosinberg, Valtomer, *two* Officers *and* Soldiers, *almost at the same moment by different sides of the stage.*

Ros. This way the sound did come.

Valt. How came ye, soldiers? heard ye that report?

1st Sol. We heard it, and it seem'd to come from hence,
Which made us this way hie.

Ros. A horrid fancy darts across my mind.
(*A groan heard from the cave.*)
(*To* Valt.) Ha! heard'st thou that?

Valt. Methinks it is the groan of one in pain. (*A second groan.*)

Ros. Ha! there again!

Valt. From this cave's mouth, so dark and choak'd with weeds,
It seems to come.

Ros. I'll enter first.

1st Off. My Lord, the way is tangled o'er with briers:
Hard by, a few short paces to the left,
There is another mouth of easier access;
I pass'd it even now.

Ros. Then shew the way. [Exeunt.

Scene III.—the inside of the cave.

Basil *discovered lying on the ground, with his head raised a little upon a few stones and earth, the pistols lying beside him, and blood upon his breast. Enter* Rosinberg, Valtomer, *and* Officers. *Rosinberg, upon seeing Basil, stops short with horrour, and remains motionless for some time.*

Valt. Great God of heaven! what a sight is this!
(Rosinberg *runs to* Basil, *and stoops down by his side.*)

Ros. O Basil! O my friend! what hast thou done?

Bas. (*Covering his face with his hand.*)
Why art thou come? I thought to die in peace.

Ros. Thou know'st me not—I am thy Rosinberg,
Thy dearest, truest friend, thy loving kinsman!
Thou dost not say to me, Why art thou come?

Bas. Shame knows no kindred: I am fall'n, disgrac'd;
My fame is gone, I cannot look upon thee.

Ros. My Basil, noble spirit! talk not thus!
The greatest mind untoward fate may prove:
Thou art our gen'rous, valiant leader still,
Fall'n as thou art—and yet thou art not fall'n;
Who says thou art, must put his harness on,
And prove his words in blood.

Bas. Ah Rosinberg! this is no time to boast!
I once had hopes a glorious name to gain;
Too proud of heart, I did too much aspire;
The hour of trial came, and found me wanting!
Talk not of me, but let me be forgotten.—
And O! my friend! something upbraids me here, (*laying his hand on his breast.*)
For that I now remember how oft-times
I have usurp'd it o'er thy better worth,
Most vainly teaching where I should have learnt;
But thou wilt pardon me.—

Ros. (*taking* Basil's *hand, and pressing it to his breast.*) Rend not my heart in twain! O talk not thus!
I knew thou wert superiour to myself,
And to all men beside: thou wert my pride;
I paid thee def'rence with a willing heart.

Bas. It was delusion, all delusion, Rosinberg!
I feel my weakness now, I own my pride.
Give me thy hand, my time is near the close:
Do this for me: thou know'st my love, Victoria—

Ros. O curse that woman! she it is alone—
She has undone us all!

Bas. It doubles unto me the stroke of death
To hear thee name her thus. O curse her not!
The fault is mine; she's gentle, good and blameless.—
Thou wilt not then my dying wish fulfil?

Ros. I will! I will! what wouldst thou have me do?

Bas. See her when I am gone; be gentle with her;
And tell her that I bless'd her in my death;
E'en in my agonies I lov'd and bless'd her.
Wilt thou do this?

Ros. I'll do what thou desir'st.

Bas. I thank thee, Rosinberg; my time draws near.
(*Raising his head a little, and perceiving* Officers.)
Is there not some one here? are we alone?

Ros. (*making a sign for the* Officers *to retire.*)
'Tis but a sentry, to prevent intrusion.

Bas. Thou know'st this desp'rate deed from sacred rites
Hath shut me out: I am unbless'd of men,
And what I am in sight of th' awful God,
I dare not think; when I am gone, my friend,
O! let a good man's prayers to heaven ascend
For an offending spirit!—Pray for me.
What thinkest thou? although an outcast here,
May not some heavenly mercy still be found?

Ros. Thou wilt find mercy—my beloved Basil—
It cannot be that thou shouldst be rejected.
I will with bended knee—I will implore—
It choaks mine utterance—I will pray for thee—

Bas. This comforts me—thou art a loving friend. (*A noise without.*)

Ros. (*to* Off. *without.*) What noise is that?

Enter Valtomer.

Valt. (*to* Ros.) My lord, the soldiers all insist to enter.
What shall I do? they will not be denied:
They say that they will see their noble gen'ral.

Bas. Ah my brave fellows! do they call me so?

Ros. Then let them come!

Enter Soldiers, *who gather round* Basil, *and look mournfully upon him; he holds out his hand to them with a faint smile.*

Bas. My gen'rous soldiers, this is kindly meant.
I'm low i' the dust; God bless you all, brave hearts!

1st Sol. And God bless you, my noble, noble gen'ral!
We'll never follow such a leader more.

2d Sol. Ah! had you staid with us, my noble gen'ral,
We would have died for you.

(*3d Soldier endeavours next to speak, but cannot; and kneeling down by* Basil, *covers his face with his cloak.* Rosinberg *turns his face to the wall and weeps.*)

Bas. (*in a very faint broken voice.*) Where art thou? do not leave me, Rosinberg—
Come near to me—these fellows make me weep:
I have no power to weep—give me thy hand—
I love to feel thy grasp—my heart beats strangely—
It beats as tho' its breathings would be few—
Remember—

Ros. Is there aught thou wouldst desire?

Bas. Nought but a little earth to cover me,
And lay the smooth sod even with the ground—
Let no stone mark the spot—give no offence.
I fain would say—what can I say to thee?

(*A deep pause; after a feeble struggle,* Basil *expires.*)

1st Sol. That motion was his last.

2d Sol. His spirit's fled.

1st Sol. God grant it peace! it was a noble spirit!

4th Sol. The trumpet's sound did never rouse a braver.

1st Sol. Alas! no trumpet e'er shall rouse him more,
Until the dreadful blast that wakes the dead.

2d Sol. And when that sounds it will not wake a braver.

3d Sol. How pleasantly he shar'd our hardest toil!
Our coarsest food the daintiest fare he made.

4th Sol. Ay, many a time, i' the cold damp plain has he
With cheerful count'nance cried, "Good rest, my hearts!"
Then wrapp'd him in his cloak, and laid him down
E'en like the meanest soldier in the field.

(Rosinberg *all this time continues hanging over the body, and gazing upon it.* Valtomer *now endeavours to draw him away.*)

Valt. This is too sad, my Lord.

Ros. There, seest thou how he lies? so fix'd, so pale?
Ah! what an end is this! thus lost! thus fall'n!
To be thus taken in his middle course,
Where he so nobly strove; till cursed passion
Came like a sun-stroke on his midday toil,
And cut the strong man down. O Basil! Basil!

Valt. Forbear, my friend, we must not sorrow here.

Ros. He was the younger brother of my soul.

Valt. Indeed, my lord, it is too sad a sight.
Time calls us, let the body be remov'd.

Ros. He was—O! he was like no other man!

Valt. (*still endeavouring to draw him away.*)
Nay, now forbear.

Ros. I lov'd him from his birth!

Valt. Time presses, let the body be remov'd.

Ros. What say'st thou?

Valt. Shall we not remove him hence?

Ros. He has forbid it, and has charg'd me well
To leave his grave unknown; for that the church
All sacred rites to the self-slain denies.
He would not give offence.

1st Sol. What, shall our gen'ral, like a very wretch,
Be laid unhonour'd in the common ground?
No last salute to bid his soul farewell?
No warlike honours paid? it shall not be.

2d Sol. Laid thus? no, by the blessed light of heav'n!
In the most holy spot in Mantua's walls
He shall be laid: in face of day be laid;
And tho' black priests should curse us in the teeth,
We will fire o'er him whilst our hands have power
To grasp a musket.

Several Soldiers. Let those who dare forbid it!

Ros. My brave companions, be it as you will.
(*Spreading out his arms as if he would embrace the Soldiers.—They prepare to remove the body.*)

Valt. Nay, stop a while, we will not move it now,
For see a mournful visitor appears,
And must not be denied.

Enter Victoria and Isabella.

Vict. I thought to find him here, where has he fled?

(Rosinberg *points to the body without speaking.* Victoria *shrieks out and falls into the arms of* Isabella.

Isab. Alas! my gentle mistress, this will kill thee.

Vict. (*recovering.*) Unloose thy hold, and let me look upon him.
O! horrid, horrid sight! my ruin'd Basil!
Is this the sad reward of all thy love?
O! I have murder'd thee!

(*Kneels down by the body and bends over it.*)
These wasted streams of life! this bloody wound! (*Laying her hand upon his heart.*)
Is there no breathing here? all still! all cold!
Open thine eyes, speak, be thyself again,
And I will love thee, serve thee, follow thee,
In spite of all reproach. Alas! alas!
A lifeless corse art thou forever laid,
And dost not hear my call.—

Ros. No, madam; now your pity comes too late.

Vict. Dost thou upbraid me? O! I have deserv'd it!

Ros. No, madam, no, I will not now upbraid:
But woman's grief is like a summer storm,
Short as it violent is; in gayer scenes,
Where soon thou shalt in giddy circles blaze,
And play the airy goddess of the day,
Thine eye, perchance, amidst th' observing crowd,
Shall mark th' indignant face of Basil's friend,
And then it will upbraid.

Vict. No, never, never! thus it shall not be.
To the dark, shaded cloister wilt thou go,
Where sad and lonely, thro' the dismal grate
Thou'lt spy my wasted form, and then upbraid me.

Ros. Forgive me, heed me not; I'm griev'd at heart;
I'm fretted, gall'd, all things are hateful to me.
If thou didst love my friend, I will forgive thee;
I must forgive thee: with his dying breath
He bade me tell thee, that his latest thoughts
Were love to thee; in death he lov'd and bless'd thee.

(Victoria *goes to throw herself upon the body but is prevented by* Valtomer *and* Isabella *who support her in their arms and endeavour to draw her away from it.*)

Vict. O! force me not away! by his cold corse,
Let me lie down and weep. O! Basil, Basil!
The gallant and the brave! how hast thou loved me!
If there is any holy kindness in you,
(*To* Isab. *and* Valt.)
Tear me not hence.
For he lov'd me in thoughtless folly lost,
With all my faults, most worthless of his love;
And him I'll love in the low bed of death,
In horrour and decay.—
Near his lone tomb I'll spend my wretched days
In humble pray'r for his departed spirit:
Cold as his grave shall be my earthy bed,
As dark my cheerless cell. Force me not hence.
I will not go, for grief hath made me strong.
(*Struggling to get loose.*)

Ros. Do not withhold her, leave her sorrow free.

(*They let her go, and she throws herself upon the body in an agony of grief.*)
It doth subdue the sternness of my grief
To see her mourn him thus.—Yet I must curse.—
Heav'n's curses light upon her damned father,
Whose crooked policy has wrought this wreck!

Isab. If he has done it, you are well reveng'd,
For all his hidden plots detected are.
Gauriccio, for some int'rest of his own,
His master's secret dealings with the foe
Has to Lanoy betray'd; who straight hath sent,
On the behalf of his imperial lord,
A message full of dreadful threats to Mantua.
His discontented subjects aid him not:
He must submit to the degrading terms
A haughty conq'ring power will now impose.

Ros. And art thou sure of this?

Isab. I am, my lord.

Ros. Give me thy hand, I'm glad on't, O! I'm glad on't!
It should be so? how like a hateful ape
Detected, grinning, 'midst his pilfer'd hoard,
A cunning man appears, whose secret frauds
Are open'd to the day! scorn'd, hooted, mock'd!
Scorn'd by the very fools who most admir'd
His worthless art. But when a great mind falls,
The noble nature of man's gen'rous heart
Doth bear him up against the shame of ruin;
With gentle censure using but its faults
As modest means to introduce his praise;
For pity like a dewy twilight comes
To close th' oppressive splendour of his day,
And they who but admir'd him in his height,
His alter'd state lament, and love him fall'n.
[Exeunt.

THE TRYAL: A COMEDY.

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

MEN.

Mr. Withrington.
Mr. Harwood.
Colonel Hardy.
Sir Loftus Prettyman.
Mr. Opal.
Mr. Royston.
Humphry.
Jonathan.
Thomas.
Servants, &c.

WOMEN.

Agnes, } *Nieces to* Withrington.
Mariane, }
Miss Eston.
Mrs. Betty, *Maid to* Agnes.

⁂ *Scene in* Bath, *and in* Mr. Withrington's *house in the environs of* Bath.

ACT I.

Scene I.—Mr. Withrington's house.

Enter Withrington and his two Nieces hanging upon his arms, coaxing him in a playful manner as they advance towards the front of the Stage.

With. Poo, poo, get along, young gipsies, and don't tease me any more.

Ag. So we will, my good Sir, when you have granted our suit.

Mar. Do, dear uncle, it will be so pleasant!

With. Get along, get along. Don't think to wheedle me into it. It would be very pleasant, truly, to see an old fellow, with a wig upon his bald pate, making one in a holyday mummery with a couple of madcaps.

Ag. Nay, don't lay the fault upon the wig, good Sir, for it is as youthful, and as sly, and as saucy looking as the best head of hair in the county. As for your old wig, indeed, there was so much curmudgeon-like austerity about it, that young people fled from before it, as, I dare say, the birds do at present; for I am sure it is stuck up in some cherry-orchard by this time, to frighten away the sparrows.

With You are mistaken, young mistress, it is up stairs in my wig-box.

Ag. Well, I am glad it is any where but upon your pate, uncle. (*Turning his face towards* Mariane.) Look at him, pray! is he not ten years younger since he wore it? Is there one bit of an old grumbler to be seen about him now?

Mar. He is no more like the man he was than I am like my godmother. (*Clapping his shoulder.*) You must even do as we have bid you, sir, for this excuse will never bring you off.

With. Poo, poo, it is a foolish girl's whimsy: I'll have nothing to do with it.

Ag. It is a reasonable woman's desire, gentle guardian, and you must consent to it. For if I am to marry at all, I am resolved to have a respectable man, and a man who is attached to me; and to find out such a one, in my present situation, is impossible. I am provoked beyond all patience with your old greedy lords, and match-making aunts, introducing their poor noodle heirs-apparent to me. Your ambitious esquires, and proud obsequious baronets are intolerable, and your rakish younger brothers are nauseous: such creatures only surround me, whilst men of sense stand at a distance, and think me as foolish as the company I keep. One would swear I was made of amber, to attract all the dust and chaff of the community.

With. There is some truth in this, 'faith.

Ag. You see how it is with me, so my dear, loving, good uncle, (*coaxing him.*) do let Mariane take my place for a little while. We are newly come to Bath; nobody knows us: we have been but at one ball, and as Mariane looks so much better than me, she has already been mistaken for the heiress, and I for her portionless cousin: I have told you how we shall manage it: do lend us your assistance!

With. So in the disguise of a portionless spinster, you are to captivate some man of sense, I suppose?

Ag. I would fain have it so.

With. Go, go, thou art a fool, Agnes! who will fall in love with a little ordinary girl like thee? why, there is not one feature in thy face that a man would give a farthing for.

Mar. You are very saucy, uncle.

Ag. I should despair of my beauty to be sure, since I am reckoned so much like you, my dear Sir; yet old nurse told me that a rich lady, a great lady, and the prettiest lady that ever wore silk, fell in love, once on a time, with Mr. Anthony, and would have followed him to the world's end too, if it had not been for an old hunks of a father, who deserved to be drubbed for his pains. Don't you think he did, sir?

With. (*endeavouring to look angry.*) Old nurse is a fool, and you are an impudent hussy. I'll hear no more of this nonsense. (*Breaks from them and goes towards the door: they run after him, and draw him back again.*)

Ag. Nay, good Sir, we have not quite done with you yet: grant our request, and then scamper off as you please.

Mar. I'll hold both your arms till you grant it.

With. (*to* Mar.) And what makes you so eager about it, young lady? you expect, I suppose, to get a husband by the trick. O fy, fy! the poorest girl in England would blush at such a thought, who calls herself an honest one.

Ag. And Mariane would reject the richest man in England who would harbour such a suspicion. But give yourself no uneasiness about this, Sir; she need not go a husband-hunting, for she is already engaged.—(Mariane *looks frightened, and makes signs to* Agnes *over her uncle's shoulder, which she answers with a smile of encouragement.*)

With. Engaged! she is very good, truly, to manage all this matter herself, being afraid to give me any trouble, I suppose. And pray what fool has she picked out from the herd, to enter into this precious engagement with?

Ag. A foolish enough fellow to be sure, your favourite nephew, cousin Edward.

With. Hang the silly booby! how could he be such an idiot! but it can't be, it shan't be! —it is folly to put myself into a passion about it. (*To* Mariane, *who puts her hand on his shoulder to soothe him.*) Hold off your hands, Ma'am! This is news indeed to amuse me with of a morning.

Ag. Yes, uncle, and I can tell you more news; for they are not only engaged but as soon as he returns from abroad they are to be married.

With. Well, well, let them marry in the devil's name, and go a-begging if they please.

Ag. No, gentle guardian, they need not go a-begging; they will have a good fortune to support them.

With. Yes, yes, they will get a prize in the lottery, or find out the philosopher's stone, and coin their old shoes into guineas.

Ag. No, Sir, it is not that way the fortune is to come.

With. No; he has been following some knight-errant, then, I suppose, and will have an island in the South Sea for his pains.

Ag. No, you have not guessed it yet. (*Stroking his hand gently.*) Did you never hear of a good, kind, rich uncle of theirs, the generous Mr. Withrington? he is to settle a handsome provision upon them as soon as they are married, and leave them his fortune at last.

With. (*lifting up his hands*) Well, I must say thou art the sauciest little jade in the kingdom! But did you never hear that this worthy uncle of theirs, having got a new wig, which makes him ten years younger than he was, is resolved to embrace the opportunity, and seek out a wife for himself?

Ag. O! that is nothing to the purpose; for what I have said about the fortune must happen, though he should seek out a score of wives for himself.

With. Must happen! but I say it shall not happen. Whether should you or I know best?

Ag. Why me, to be sure.

With. Ha, ha, ha! how so, baggage?

Ag. (*resting her arm on his shoulder, looking archly in his face.*) You don't know, perhaps, that when I went to Scotland last summer, I travelled far, and far, as the tale says, and farther than I can tell, till I came to the Isle of Sky, where every body has the second sight, and has nothing to do but tear a little hole in a tartan-plaidy, and peering through it, in this manner, sees every thing past, present, and to come. Now, you must know, I gave an old woman half-a-crown and a roll of tobacco for a peep or two through her plaid, and what do you think I saw, uncle?

With. The devil dancing a hornpipe, I suppose.

Ag. There was somebody dancing to be sure, but it was not the devil though. Who do you think it was now?

With. Poo, poo!

Ag. It was uncle himself, at Mariane's wedding, leading down the first dance, with the bride. I saw a sheet of parchment in a corner, too, signed with his own blessed hand, and a very handsome settlement it was. So he led down the first dance himself, and we all followed after him, as merry as so many haymakers.

With. Thou hast had a sharp sight, 'faith!

Ag. And I took a second peep through the plaidy, and what do you think I saw then, Sir?

With. Nay, prate on as thou wilt.

Ag. A genteel family-house, where Edward and Mariane dwelt, and several little brats running up and down in it. Some of them so tall, and so tall, and some of them no taller than this. And there came good uncle amongst them, and they all flocked about him so merrily; every body was so glad to see him, the very scullions from the kitchen were glad; and methought he looked as well pleased himself as any of them. Don't you think he did, Sir?

With. Have done with thy prating.

Ag. I have not done yet, good Sir; for I took another peep still, and then I saw a most dismal changed family indeed. There was a melancholy sick bed set out, in the best chamber; every face was sad, and all the children were weeping. There was one dark-eyed rogue amongst them, called little Anthony, and he threw away his bread and butter, and roared like a young bull, for woe's me: old uncle was dying. (*Observing* Withrington *affected.*) But old uncle recovered though, and looked as stout as a veteran again. So I gave the old woman her plaidy, and would not look through any more.

With. Thou art the wildest little witch i the world, and wilt never be at rest till tho hast got every thing thine own way, I believe.

Ag. I thank you, I thank you, dear uncle (*leaping round his neck,*) it shall be even so and I shall have my own little boon into th bargain.

With. I did not say so.

Ag. But I know it will be so, and many thanks to you, my dear good uncle! (Mariane *ventures to come from behind,*—Withrington *looks gently to her, she holds out her hand he hesitates, and* Agnes *joins their hands together, giving them a hearty shake.*)

With. Come, come, let me get away from you now: you are a couple of insinuating gipsies. Exit, *hastily.*

Mar. (*embracing* Agnes.) Well, heaven bless thee, my sweet Agnes! thou hast done marvels for me. You gave me a fright though; I thought we were ruined.

Ag. O! I knew I should get the better of him some way or other. What a good worthy heart he has! you don't know how dearly I love this old uncle of ours.

Mar. I wonder how it is. I used to think him severe and unreasonable, with his fiddle faddle fancies about delicacy and decorum; but since you came amongst us, Agnes, you have so coaxed him, and laughed at him, and played with him, that he has become almost as frolicksome as ourselves.

Ag. Let us set about our project immediately. Nobody knows us here but lady Fade and Miss Eston: we must let them both into the secret: lady Fade is confined with bad health, and though Miss Eston, I believe, would rather tell a secret than hold her tongue, yet as long as there are streets and carriages, and balls and ribands, and feathers and fashions to talk of, there can be no great danger from her.

Mar. O! we shall do very well. How I long to frolick it away, in all the rich trappings of heir-ship, amongst those sneaking wretches the fortune-hunters! They have neglected me as a poor girl, but I will play the deuce amongst them as a rich one.

Ag. You will acquit yourself very handsomely, I dare say, and find no lack of admirers.

Mar. I have two or three in my eye just now, but of all men living I have set my heart upon humbling Sir Loftus. He insulted a friend of mine last winter, to ingratiate himself with an envious woman of quality, but I will be revenged upon him; O! how I will scorn him, and toss up my nose at him!

Ag. That is not the way to be revenged upon him, silly girl! He is haughty and reserved in his manners; and though not altogether without understanding, has never suffered a higher idea to get footing in his noddle than that of appearing a man of consequence and fashion; and though he has no happiness but in being admired as a fine gentleman, and no existence but at an assembly, he appears there with all the haughty gravity, and careless indifference of a person superiour to such paltry amusements. Such a man as this must be laughed at, not scorned; contempt must be his portion.

Mar. He shall have it then. And as for his admirer and imitator, Jack Opal, who has for these ten years past so successfully performed every kind of fine gentlemanship, that every new fool brought into fashion, any kind of bad treatment, I suppose, that happen to come into my head will be good enough for him.

Ag. Quite good enough. You have set him down for one of your admirers too?

Mar. Yes, truly, and a great many more besides.

Ag. Did you observe in the ball-room last night, a genteel young man, with dark grey eyes, and a sensible countenance, but with so little of the foppery of the fashion about him, that one took him at a distance for a much older man?

Mar. Wore he not a plain brownish coat? and stood he not very near us great part of the evening?

Ag. Yes, the very same. Pray endeavour to attract him, Mariane.

Mar. If you are very desirous to see him in my train, I will.

Ag. No, not desirous, neither.

Mar. Then wherefore should I try?

Ag. Because I would have you try every art to win him, and I would not have him to be won.

Mar. O! I comprehend it now! This is the sensible man we are in quest of.

Ag. I shall not be sorry if it proves so. I have enquired who he is, as I shall tell you by and by, and what I have learnt of him I like. Is not his appearance prepossessing?

Mar. I don't know, he is too grave and dignified for such a girl as thou art; I fear we shall waste our labour upon him.

Ag. But he does not look always so. He kept very near me, if it did not look vain, I should say followed me all the evening, and many a varied expression his countenance assumed. But when I went away arm in arm with my uncle, in our usual good-humoured way, I shall never forget the look of pleasant approbation with which he followed me. I had learnt but a little while before the mistake which the company made in regard to us, and at that moment the idea of this project came across my mind like a flash of lightning.

Mar. Very well, gentle cousin; the task you assign me is pleasing to my humour, and the idea of promoting your happiness at the same time will make it delightful. Let me see, how many lovers shall I have—one, two, three. (*Counting on her fingers.*)

Ag. I can tell you of one lover more than you wot of.

Mar. Pray who is he?

Ag. Our distant cousin the great 'squire, and man of business, from ——shire: he writes to my uncle that he will be in Bath to-day upon business of the greatest importance, which he explains to him in three pages of close-written paper; but whether he is to court me for himself, or for his son, or to solicit a great man, who is here, for a place, no mortal on earth can discover.

Mar. Well, let him come, I shall manage them all. O! if my Edward were here just now, how he would laugh at us!

Enter SERVANT.

Ser. Miss Eston.

Mar. Let us run out of her way, and say we are not at home. She will sit and talk these two hours.

Ag. But you forget you have something to say to her. (*To the servant.*) Shew her up stairs to my dressing room. [EXIT *servant*.

Mar. Pray let us run up stairs before her, or she will arrest us here with her chat.

[EXEUNT.

Miss Eston (*without.*) And it is a very bad thing for all that; I could never abide it. I wonder your master don't stop (*enters walking straight across the stage still speaking*) up those nasty chinks; there is such a wind in the hall, 'tis enough to give one a hoarseness. By the bye, Mrs. Mumblecake is sadly to-day; has your lady sent to inquire for her, William? I wonder if her [EXIT, *still talking without*) old coachman has left her? I saw a new face on the, &c. &c.

SCENE II.—THE FIELDS BEFORE MR. WITHRINGTON'S HOUSE.

Enter AGNES, MARIANE, and MISS ESTON, who seem still busy talking, from the house, and passing over the stage, arm in arm, Exeunt. Enter by the same side by which they went out, SIR LOFTUS PRETTYMAN, and HARWOOD, who stands looking behind him, as if he followed something with his eyes very eagerly.

Sir Loft. (*Advancing to the front of the stage and speaking to himself.*) How cursedly unlucky this is now! if she had come out but a few moments sooner, I should have passed her walking arm in arm with a Brittish peer. How provokingly these things always happen with me! (*observing* Harwood.) What! is he staring after her too? (*aloud*) What are you looking at, Harwood? does she walk well?

Har. I can't tell how she walks, but I could stand and gaze after her till the sun went down upon me.

Sir Loft. She is a fine woman, I grant you.

Har. (*vastly pleased.*) I knew she would please, it is impossible she should not! There is something so delightful in the play of her countenance, it would even make a plain woman beautiful.

Sir Loft. She is a fine woman, and that is no despicable praise from one who is accustomed to the elegance of fashionable beauty.

Har. I would not compare her to any thing so trifling and insipid.

Sir Loft. She has one advantage which fashionable beauty seldom possesses.

Har. What do you mean!

Sir Loft. A large fortune.

Har. (*looking disappointed.*) It is not the heiress I mean.

Sir Loft. Is it t'other girl you are raving about? She is showy at a distance, I admit, but as awkward as a dairy-maid when near you; and her tongue goes as fast as if she were repeating a pater noster.

Har. What, do you think I am silly enough to be caught with that magpie?

Sir Loft. Who is it then, Harwood? I see nobody with Miss Withrington but Miss Eston and the poor little creature her cousin.

Har. Good god! what a contemptable perversion of taste do interest and fashion create! But it is all affectation. (*Looking contemptuously at him.*)

Sir Loft. (*smiling contemptuously in return.*) Ha, ha, ha! I see how it is with you, Harwood, and I beg pardon too. The lady is very charming, I dare say; upon honour I never once looked in her face. She is a dependent relation of Miss Withrington's, I believe: now I never take notice of such girls, for if you do it once they expect you to do it again. I am sparing of my attentions, that she on whom I really bestow them may have the more reason to boast.

Har. You are right, Prettyman: she who boasts of your attentions should receive them all herself, that nobody else may know their real worth.

Sir Loft. You are severe this morning, Mr. Harwood, but you do not altogether comprehend me, I believe. I know perhaps more of the world than a studious Templar can be supposed to do, and I assure you, men of fashion upon this principle, are sparing of their words, too, that they may be listened to more attentively when they do speak.

Har. You are very right still, Sir Loftus; for if they spoke much, I'll be hang'd if they would get any body to listen to them at all.

Sir Loft. (*haughtily.*) There is another reason why men of fashion are not profuse of their words: inferior people are apt to forget themselves, and despise what is too familiar.

Har. Don't take so much pains to make me comprehend that the more fools speak the more people will despise them; I never had a clearer conviction of it in my life.

Sir Loft. (*haughtily.*) Good morning, Sir; I see Lord Saunter in the other walk, and I must own I prefer the company of one who knows, at least, the common rules of politeness. EXIT.

Har. (*alone.*) What a contemptible creature it is! He would prefer the most affected idiot, who boasts a little fashion or consequence as he calls it, to the most beautiful native char-

acter in the world. Here comes another fool, who has been gazing too, but I will not once mention her before him.

Enter Opal.

Op. Good morning, Harwood: I have been fortunate just now; I have met some fine girls, 'faith!

Har. I am glad you have met with any thing so agreeable; they are all equally charming to you, I suppose.

Op. Nay, Harwood, I know how to distinguish. There is a little animated creature amongst them, all life and spirit; on my soul I could almost be in love with her.

Har. Thou hast more discernment than I reckoned upon. If that goose, Sir Loftus, did not spoil thee, Jack, thou wouldst be a very good fellow, after all. Why I must tell you, my good Opal, that lady whom you admire, is the sweetest little gipsey in England.

Op. Is she indeed? I wish I had taken a better look of her face then; but she wears such a cursed plume of blue feathers nodding over her nose, there is scarcely one half of it to be seen.

Har. (*staring at him with astonishment.*) As I breathe! he has fallen in love with the magpie!

Op. And what is so surprising in this, pray? Does not all the world allow Miss Withrington the heiress to be a fine woman?

Har. That is not the heiress, Jack, (*pointing off the stage*) the tall lady in the middle is her. But if your Dulcinea could coin her words into farthings, she would be one of the best matches in the kingdom.

Op. Pest take it! she was pointed out to me as Miss Withrington. Pest take my stupidity! the girl is well enough, but she is not altogether— (*Mumbling to himself.*)

Har. So you bestowed all your attention on this blue-feathered lady, and let the other two pass by unnoticed.

Op. No, not unnoticed neither: Miss Withrington is too fine a figure to be overlooked any where; and for the other poor little creature, who hung upon her arm so familiarly, I could not help observing her too, because I wondered Miss Withrington allowed such a dowdy looking thing to walk with her in publick. Faith! I sent a vulgar-looking devil out of the way on a fool's errand the other morning, who insisted upon going with Prettyman and I, to the pump-room: men of fashion, you know, are always plagued with paltry fellows dangling after them

Har. Hang your men of fashion! mere paltry fellows are too good company for them.

Op. Damn it, Harwood! speak more respectfully of that class of men to whom I have the honour to belong.

Har. You mistake me, Opal, it was only the men of fashion I abused; I am too well bred to speak uncivilly, in your presence, of the other class you mentioned.

Op. I scorn your insinuation, Sir; but *whatever class of men I belong to, I praise heaven I have nothing of the sour ploddihg* book-worm about me.

Har. You do well to praise heaven for the endowments it has bestowed upon you, Opal; if all men were as thankful as you for this blessed gift of ignorance, we could not be said to live in an ungrateful generation.

Op. Talk away, laugh at your own wit as much as you please, I don't mind it. I don't trouble my head to find out bons mots of a morning.

Har. You are very right, Jack, for it would be to no purpose if you did.

Op. I speak whatever comes readiest to me; I don't study speaches for company, Harwood.

Har. I hope so, Opal; you would have a laborious life of it, indeed, if you could not speak nonsense extempore.

Op. (*drawing himself up and walking haughtily to the other side of the stage.*) I had no business to be so familiar with him. Sir Loftus is right; a reserved manner keeps impertinent people at a distance, (*aside—Turns about makes a very stiff bow to* Harwood, *and* [Exit.).

Har. (*alone.*) I am glad he is gone. What do I see? (*here* Mariane, Agnes, *and* Miss Eston *walk over the bottom of the stage attended by* Sir Loftus *and* Opal, *and* Exeunt *by the opposite side.* Har. *looking after them.*) Alas, now! that such impudent fellows should be successful, whilst I stand gazing at a distance! How lightly she trips! does she not look about to me? by heaven I'll run to her! (*Runs to the bottom of the stage, and stops short.*) Oh no! I cannot do it! but see, her uncle comes this way. He looked so kindly at her, I could not help loving him; he must be a good man; I'll make up to him, and he perhaps will join the ladies afterwards. [Exit.

ACT II.

Scene I.—a lodging-house.

Enter Roystoy and Humphry followed by Jonathan, carrying a portmanteau.

Roy. What a world of business I have got upon my hands! I must set about it immediately. Come here, Jonathan: I shall send you out in the first place.

Jon. Well, Sir.

Roy. Take the black trunk, that is left in the hall, upon your shoulder, Jonathan, and be sure you don't run against any body with it, for that might bring us into trouble. And perhaps as you go along, you may chance to meet with some of the Duke of Begall's servants, or with somebody who can tell you where his Grace lodges in this town, and you may enquire of them, without saying I desired you; you understand me, Jonathan?

Jon. O yes, your honour!

Roy. But first of all, however, if you see any decent hair-dresser's shop in your way, desire them to send somebody here for my wig; and like enough they may tell you, at the same time, where there is an honest Town-crier to be had; I'll have Phœbe's black whelp cried directly: and hark ye, Jonathan, you may say as though the dog were your own, you understand, they will expect such a devil of a reward else; and pri'thee, man! step into the corn-market, if thou canst find out the way, and enquire the price of oats.

Jon. Yes, please your honour, but am I to go trudging about to all these places with that great heavy trunk upon my shoulder?

Roy. No, numskull! did I not bid you carry it to the Inn where the London stage puts up? by the bye, you had better take it to the waggon—but first ask the coachman, what he charges for the carriage; you can take it to the waggon afterwards. I will suffer no man to impose upon me. You will remember all this distinctly now, as I have told it you Jonathan?

Jon. (*counting to himself upon his fingers.*) O yes, your honour! I'll manage it all I warrant! [Exit.

Roy. What a world of business I have upon my hands, Humphry! I am as busy as a minister of state,

Re-enter Jonathan, scratching his head.

Jon. La your honour! I have forgot all about his Grace, and the black whelp.

Roy. Damn your muddle pate! did not I bid you enquire where his Grace lives, and if you happen to see—

Jon, Ods bodickins! I remember it every word now! and the whelp is to be called by the Town-crier, just as one would call anything that is lost.

Roy. Yes, yes, go about it speedily. (*Exit* Jon.) Now in the first place, my good Humphry, I must see after the heiress I told you of; and it is a business which requires a great deal of management too; for—

Re-enter Jonathan, scratching his head.

Damn that dunder-headed fool! here he is again.

Jon. Your honour won't be angry now, but hang me, if I can tell whether I am to take that there trunk to the coach, or the waggon.

Roy. Take it to the coach—no, no, to the waggon—yes, yes, I should have said—pest take it! carry it where thou wilt, fool, and plague me no more about it. (*Exit* Jon.) One might as well give directions to a horse-block. Now, as I was saying, Humphrey, this requires a great deal of management; for if the lady don't like me, she may happen to like my son: so I must feel my way a little, before I speak directly to the purpose.

Humph. Ay, your honour is always feeling your way.

Roy. And as for the Duke, I will ply him as close as I can with solicitations in the mean time, without altogether stating my request: for if I get the lady, George shall have the office, and if he gets the lady, I shall have the office. So we shall have two chances in our favour both ways, my good Humphry.

Humph. Belike, Sir, if we were to take but one business in hand at a time, we might come better off at the long run.

Roy. O! thou hast no head for business, Humphry: thou hast no genius for business, my good Humphry. (*smiling conceitedly.*)

Humph. Why, for certain, your honour has a marvellous deal of wit, but I don't know how it is, nothing that we take in hand ever comes to any good; and what provokes me more than all the rest, is, that the more pains we take about it, the worse it always succeeds.

Roy. Humph! we can't guard against every cross accident.

Humph. To be sure Sir, cross accidents will happen to every body, but certes! we have more than our own share of them.

Roy. Well, don't trouble yourself about it: I have head enough to manage my own affairs, and more than my own too. Why, my lord Slumber can't even grant a new lease, nor imprison a vagabond for poaching, without my advice and direction: did I not manage all Mr. Harebrain's election for him? and, but for one of these cursed accidents or two, had brought him in for his Borough, as neatly as my glove. Nay, if his Grace and I get into good understanding together, there is no knowing, but I may have affairs of the nation upon my hands. Ha, ha, ha! poor Humphry, thou hast no comprehension of all this: thou think'st me a very wonderful man, dost thou not?

Humph. I must own I do sometimes marvel at your honour.

Enter Mr. Withrington.

Roy. Ha! how do you do, my dear cousin? I hope I have the happiness of seeing you in good health: I am heartily rejoiced to see you, my very good Sir. (*Shaking him heartily by the hand.*)

With. I thank you, Sir, you are welcome to Bath; I did not expect the pleasure of seeing you here.

Roy. Why, my dear worthy Sir, I am a man of so much business, so toss'd about, so harass'd with a multiplicity of affairs, that, I protest, I can't tell myself one day what part of the world I shall be in the next.

With. You give yourself a great deal of trouble, Mr. Royston.

Roy. O! hang it! I never spare myself: I must work to make others work, cousin Withrington. I have got a world of new alterations going on at Royston-hall; if you would take a trip down to see them—

With. I am no great traveller. Sir.

Roy. I have plough'd up the bowling green, and cut down the elm-trees; I have built new stables, and fill'd up the horse-pond; I have

dug up the orchard, and pull'd down the old fruit-wall, where that odd little temple used to stand.

With. And is the little temple pulled down too? pray, what has become of your Vicar's sister, Mrs. Mary? we drunk tea with her there, I remember; is she married yet? she was a very modest-looking gentlewoman.

Roy. So you remember her too? Well, I have pull'd down every foot of it, and built a new cart-house with the bricks.—Good commodious stalls for thirty horses, cousin Withrington; they beat Sir John Houndly's all to nothing: it is as clever, a well-constructed building as any in the country.

With. Has Sir John built a new house in the country?

Roy. No, no, the stables I say.

With. O! you are talking of the stables again.

Roy. But when I get the new addition to the mansion-house finished, that will be the grand improvement: the best carpenters' work in the country, my dear Sir, all well-season'd timber from Norway.

Humph. It is part of a disputed wreck, Sir, and if the law-suit about the right to it turns out in my master's favour, as it should do, it will be the cheapest built house in the country. Oh! let his honour alone for making a bargain.

With. So you have got a law-suit on your hands, Mr. Royston? I hope you are not much addicted to this kind of amusement, you will find it a very expensive one.

Roy. Bless you, my good Sir, I am the most peaceable creature in the world, but I will suffer no man to impose upon me.

With. (*smiling.*) But you suffer the women sometimes to do so, do you not?

Humph. No, nor the women neither, Sir: for it was but th' other day that he prosecuted widow Gibson, for letting her chickens feed amongst his corn, and it was given in his honour's favour as in right it should have been.

With. (*archly.*) And who was adjudged to pay the expenses of court, Mr. Humphry!

Humph. Ay, to be sure, his honour was obliged to pay that.

With. (*archly.*) But the widow paid swingingly for it, I suppose?

Humph. Nay 'faith, after all, they but fined her in a sixpence; yet that always shew d, you know, that she was in the wrong.

With. To be sure, Mr. Humphry; and the sixpence would indemnify your master for the costs of suit.

Humph. Nay, as a body may say, he might as well have let her alone, for any great matter he made of it that way; but it was very wrong in her, you know, Sir, to let her hens go amongst his honour's corn, when she knew very well she was too poor to make up the loss to his honour.

With. Say no more about it, my good Humphry; you have vindicated your master most ably, and I have no doubts at all in regard to the propriety of his conduct.

Humph. (*very well pleased.*) Ay, thank God, I do sometimes make shift, in my poor way, to edge in a word for his honour.

Roy. (*not so well pleased.*) Thou art strangely given to prating this morning. (*to* Humph.) By the bye, cousin Withrington, I must consult you about my application to his Grace.

Humph. (*aside to* Royston, *pulling him by the sleeve.*) You forget to ask for the lady, Sir.

With. (*turning round.*) What did you say of his Grace?

Roy. No, no, I should— I meant—did I not say the gracious young lady your niece? I hope she is well.

With. (*smiling.*) She is very well; you shall go home with me and visit her.

Roy. I am infinitely obliged to you, my worthy good Sir: I shall attend you with the greatest pleasure. Some ladies have no dislike to a good-looking gentleman-like man, although he may be past the bloom of his youth, cousin; however, young men do oftener carry the day, I believe: my son George is a good likely fellow; I expect him in Bath every hour. I shall have the honour of following you, my dear Sir. Remember my orders, Humphry. [Exeunt.

Enter Harwood hastily, looking round as if he sought some one, and were disappointed.

Har. (*alone.*) He is gone, I have miss'd the good uncle of Agnes—what is the matter with me now, that the sound of an old man's voice should agitate me thus? did I not feel it was the sound of something which belong'd to her? in faith! I believe, if her kitten was to mew, I should hasten to hold some intercourse with it. I can stay in this cursed house no longer, and when I do go out, there is but one way these legs of mine will carry me—the alley which leads to her dwelling—Well, well, I have been but six times there to-day already; I may have a chance of seeing her at last—I'll run after the old gentleman now—what a delightful witch it is! [Exit *hastily*.

Scene II.—Withrington's House.

Agnes and Mariane discovered; Mariane reading a letter, and Agnes looking earnestly and gladly in her face.

Ag. My friend Edward is well, I see; pray what does the traveller say for himself?

Mar. (*putting up the letter.*) You shall read it all by and by—every thing that is pleasant and kind.

Ag. Heaven prosper you both! you are happier than I am with all my fortune, Mariane; you have a sincere lover.

Mar. And so have you, Agnes: Harwood will bear the trial: I have watch'd him closely, and I will venture my word upon him.

Ag. (*taking her in her arms.*) Now if thou

art not deceiv'd, thou art the dearest swee cousin on earth! (*Pausing and looking seriously*) Ah no! it cannot be! I am but an ordinary-looking girl, as my uncle says. (*With vivacity.*) I would it were so!

Enter SERVANT.

Ser. Sir Loftus Prettyman and Mr. Opal.

Mar. I am at home. (*Exit* Servant.) can't attend to these fools till I have put u my letter: do you receive them; I will soon return. [EXIT

Enter SIR LOFTUS and OPAL, dressed pretty much alike SIR LOFTUS makes a haughty distant bow to AGNES, and OPAL makes another very like it.

Ag. Have the goodness to be seated, Sir (*to Sir Loftus*). Pray, Sir (*to Opal, making courteous motion as if she wish'd them to sit down,*) Miss Withrington will be here immediately. (Sir Loftus *makes a slight bow without speaking;* Opal *does the same, and both saunter about with their hats in their hands.*)

Ag. I hope you had a pleasant walk after we left you, Sir Loftus?

Sir Loft. (*looking affectedly, as if he did not understand her.*) I beg pardon—O! you were along with Miss Withrington. (*Mumbling something which is not heard.*)

Ag. (*to* Op.) You are fond of that walk Mr. Opal; I think I have seen you there frequently.

Op. Ma'am, you are very—(*mumbling something which is not heard, in the same manner with* Sir Loftus, *but still more absurd.*) I do sometimes walk—(*mumbling again.*)

Ag. (*to* Sir Loft.) The country is delightful round Bath.

Sir Loft. Ma'am!

Ag. Don't you think so, Mr. Opal?

Op. 'Pon honour I never attended to it. (*A long pause;* Sir Loftus *and* Opal *strut about conceitedly. Enter* Mariane, *and both of them run up to her at once, with great pleasure and alacrity.*)

Sir Loft. I hope I see Miss Withrington entirely recovered from the fatigues of the morning?

Mar. Pretty well, after the fatigue of dressing too, which is a great deal worse, Sir Loftus. (*carelessly.*)

Op. For the ball, I presume?

Sir Loft. I am delighted—

Mar. (*addressing herself to* Agnes, *without attending to him.*) Do you know what a provoking mistake my milliner has made?

Ag. I don't know.

Sir Loft, I hope, Madam—

Mar. (*to* Ag.) She has made up my dress with the colour of all others I dislike.

Op. This is very provoking indeed, I would—

Mar. (*still speaking to* Ag. *without attending to them.*) And she has sent home my petticoat all patch'd over with scraps of foil, like a Mayday dress for a chimney-sweeper.

Sir Loft. (*thrusting in his face near* Mariane, *and endeavouring to be attended to.*) A very good comparison, ha, ha!

Op. (*thrusting in his face at the other side of her.*) Very good indeed, ha, ha, ha!

Mar. (*still speaking to* Agnes, *who winks significantly without attending to them.*) I'll say nothing about it, but never employ her again.

Sir Loft. (*Going round to her other ear, and making another attempt.*) I am delighted, Miss Withrington—

Mar. (*carelessly.*) Are you, Sir Loftus? (*To* Agnes.) I have broken my fan, pray put it by with your own, my dear Agnes! (*Exit* Agnes *into the adjoining room, and* Sir Loftus *gives* Opal *a significant look upon which he retires to the bottom of the stage, and, after sauntering a little there,* EXIT.)

Sir Loft. (*seeming a little piqued.*) If you would have done me the honour to hear me, Ma'am, I should have said, I am delighted to see you dress'd, as I hope I may presume from it you intend going to the ball to-night.

Mar. Indeed I am too capricious to know whether I do or not; do you think it will be pleasant?

Sir Loft. Very pleasant, if the devotions of a thousand admirers can make it so.

Mar. O! the devotions of a thousand admirers, are like the good will of every body; one steady friendship is worth it all.

Sir Loft. From which may I infer, that one faithful adorer, in your eyes, outvalues all the thousand? (*affecting to be tender.*) Ah! so would I have Miss Withrington to believe! and if that can be any inducement, she will find such a one there, most happy to attend her.

Mar. Will she? I wonder who this may be: what knid of man is he, pray?

Sir Loft. (*with a conceited simper, at the same time in a pompous manner.*) Perhaps it will not be boasting too much to say, he is a man of fashion, and not altogether insignificant in the world.

Mar. Handsome and accomplished too, Sir Loftus?

Sir Loft. I must not presume, Ma'am, to boast of my accomplishments.

Mar. (*affecting a look of disappointment.*) O! lud! so it is yourself after all! I have not so much penetration as I thought. (*Yawning twice very wide.*) Bless me! what makes me yawn so? I forgot to visit my old woman, who sells the cakes, this morning, that must be it. (*Yawning again.*) Do you love gingerbread, Sir Loftus? (Sir Loftus *bites his lips, and struts proudly away to the other side of the stage, whilst* Agnes *peeps from the closet, and makes signs of encouragement to* Mariane.)

Mar. Well, after all, I believe it will be pleasant enough to go to the ball with such an accomplished attendant.

Sir Loft. (*taking encouragement and smothering his pride.*) Are you so obliging, Miss Withrington? will you permit me to have the happiness of attending you?

Mar. If you'll promise to make it very agreeable to me: you are fond of dancing, I suppose?

Sir Loft. I'll do any thing you desire me; but why throw away time so precious in the rough familiar exercise of dancing? is there not something more distinguished, more refined, in enjoying the conversation of those we love?

Mar. In the middle of a crowd, Sir Loftus?

Sir Loft. What is that crowd to us? we have nothing to do but to despise it: whilst they stare upon us with vulgar admiration, we shall talk together, smile together, attend only to each other, like beings of a different order.

Mar. O! that will be delightful! but don't you think we may just peep slyly over our shoulder now and then, to see them admiring us? (Sir Loftus *bites his lips again, and struts to the bottom of the stage, whilst* Agnes *peeps out from the closet, and makes signs to* Mariane.)

Mar. (*carelessly pulling a small case from her pocket.*) Are not these handsome brilliants, Sir Loftus?

Sir Loft. (*very much struck with the sparkling of the diamonds, but pretending not to look at them.*) Upon my word, Ma'am, I am no judge of trinkets.

Mar. They are clumsily set; I shall give them to my cousin.

Sir Loft. (*forgetting himself.*) Why, Ma'am, do you seriously mean—They are of a most incomparable water!

Mar. (*archly.*) I thought you had not attended to them.

Sir Loft. (*tenderly.*) It is impossible, in the presence of Miss Withrington, to think of any thing but the cruelty with which she imposes silence on a heart that adores her.

Mar. Nay, you entirely mistake me, Sir Loftus; I am ready to hear you with the greatest good nature imaginable.

Sir Loft. It is a theme, perhaps, on which my tongue would too long dwell.

Mar. O! not at all; I have leisure and a great deal of patience too, at present; I beg you would by no means hurry yourself.

Sir Loft. (*after a pause, looking foolish and embarrassed.*) Few words, perhaps, will better suit the energy of passion.

Mar. Just as you please, Sir Loftus; if you chuse to say it in a few words I am very well satisfied.

(*Another pause.*) Sir Loftus *very much embarrassed.*)

Enter WITHRINGTON and HARWOOD: Sir Loftus seems much relieved.

Sir Loft. (*aside.*) Heaven be praised, they are come!

Mar. (*to* With.) I thought you were to have brought Mr. Royston with you.

With. He left us at a shop by the way, to enquire the price of turnip-seed; but he will be here by-and-by if a hundred other things do not prevent him. (*Bows to* Sir Loftus; *then turns to* Harwood, *and speaks as if he resumed a conversation which had just been broken off, whilst* Sir Loftus *and* Mariane *retire to the bottom of the stage.*) I perfectly agree with you, Mr. Harwood, that the study and preparation requisite for your profession is not altogether a dry treasuring up of facts in the memory, as many of your young students conceive: he who pleads the cause of man before fellowmen, must know what is in the heart of man as well as in the book of records; and what study is there in nature so noble, so interesting as this?

Har. But the most pleasing part of our task, my good Sir, is not the least difficult. Where application only is wanting I shall not be left behind; for I am not without ambition, though the younger son of a family by no means affluent; and I have a widowed mother, whose hopes of seeing me respectable must not be disappointed. I assure you there is nothing— (*Listening.*)

With. Go on, Mr. Harwood, I have great pleasure in hearing you.

Har. I thought I heard a door move.

With. It is Agnes in the next room, I dare say; she is always making a noise.

Har. In the next room!

With. But you were going to assure me—Have the goodness to proceed.

Har. I was going to say—I rather think I said—I am sure— (*Listening again.*)

With. Poo! there is nobody there.

Har. Well, I said—I think I told you—In faith, my good Sir, I will tell you honestly, I have forgot what I meant to say.

With. No matter, you will remember it again. Ha, ha, ha! it puts me in mind of a little accident which happened to myself when I was in Lincoln's-Inn. Two or three of us met one evening, to be cheerful together, and—(*Whilst* Withrington *begins his story,* Agnes *enters softly from the adjoining closet unperceived; but* Harwood *on seeing her runs eagerly up to her, leaving* Withrington *astonished, in the middle of his discourse.*)

Har. (*to* Ag.) Ha! After so many false alarms, you steal upon us at last like a little thief.

Ag. And I steal something very good from you too, if you lose my uncle's story by this interruption; for I know by his face he was telling one.

With. Raillery is not always well timed, Miss Agnes Withrington.

Ag. Nay, do not be cross with us, Sir. Mr. Harwood knew it was too good to be spent upon one pair of ears, so he calls in another to partake.

With. Get along, baggage.

Ag. So I will, uncle; for I know that only means with you, that I should place myself close to your elbow.

With. Well, two or three of us young fellows were met—did I not say—

Ag. At Lincoln's-Inn. (Withrington *hesitates.*)

Har. She has named it, Sir.

With. I know well enough it was there. And if I remember well, George Buckner was one of us. (Agnes *gives a gentle hem to suppress a cough.*)

Har. (*eagerly.*) You was going to speak, Miss Withrington?

Ag. No, indeed, I was not.

With. Well, George Buckner and two or three more of us—We were in a very pleasant humour that night—(Agnes *making a slight motion of her hand to fasten some pin in her dress.*)

Har. (*eagerly.*) Do you not want something? (*To* Agnes.)

Ag. No, I thank you, I want nothing.

With. (*half amused, half peevish.*) Nay, say what you please to one another, for my story is ended.

Har. My dear Sir, we are perfectly attentive.

Ag. Now, pray, uncle!

With. (*to* Ag.) Now pray hold thy tongue. I forgot. I must consult the Court Calendar on Royston's account. (*Goes to a table and takes up a red book which he turns over.*)

Ag. (*to* Har.) How could you do so to my uncle? I would not have interrupted him for the world.

Har. Ay, chide me well; I dearly love to be chidden.

Ag. Do not invite me to it. I am said to have a very good gift that way, and you will soon have too much I believe.

Har. O no! I would come every hour to be chidden!

Ag. And take it meekly too?

Har. Nay, I would have my revenge: I should call you scolding Agnes, and little Agnes, and my little Agnes.

Ag. You forget my dignity, Mr. Harwood.

Har. Oh! you put all dignity out of countenance! The great Mogul himself would forget his own in your presence.

Ag. But they are going to the garden: I am resolved to be one of the party. (*As she goes to join* Sir Loftus *and* Mariane, *who open a glass door leading to the garden,* Harwood *goes before, walking backwards, and his face turned to her.*) You will break your pate presently, if you walk with that retrograde step, like a dancing-master giving me a lesson. Do you think I shall follow you as if you had the fiddle in your hand?

Har. Ah, Miss Withrington! it is you who have got the fiddle, and I who must follow. [Exeunt *into the garden.*

Re-enter Sir Loftus from the Garden, looking about for his hat.

Sir Loft. O! here it is.

Enter Opal.

Op. What, here alone?

Sir Loft. She is in the garden, I shall join her immediately.

Op. All goes on well I suppose?

Sir Loft. Why I don't know how it is—nobody hears us? (*Looking round.*) I don't know how it is, but she does not seem to comprehend perfectly in what light I am regarded by the world: that is to say, by that part of it which deserves to be called so.

Op. No! that is strange enough.

Sir Loft. Upon my honour, she treats me with as much careless familiarity as if I were some plain neighbour's son in the country.

Op. 'Pon honour this is very strange.

Sir Loft. I am not without hopes of succeeding; but I will confess to you, I wish she would change her manner of behaving to me. On the word of a gentleman, it is shocking! Suppose you were to give her a hint, that she may just have an idea of the respect which is paid by every well-bred person—You understand me, Opal?

Op. O! perfectly. I shall give her to know that men like us, my dear friend—

Sir Loft. (*not quite satisfied*) I don't know—Suppose you were to leave out all mention of yourself—Your own merit could not fail to be inferred.

Op. Well, I shall do so.

Sir Loft. Let us go to the garden. [Exeunt.

Enter Miss Eston, speaking as she enters.

I have been all over the town, and here I am at last quite tired to death. How do you—(*Looking round.*) O la! there is nobody here. Mr. Opal is gone too. I'll wait till they return. (*Takes up a book, then looks at herself in the glass, then takes up the book again. Yawning.*) 'Tis all about imagination and the understanding, and I don't know what—I dare say it is good enough to read of a Sunday. (*Yawns and lays it down.*) O la! I wish they would come!

Enter Royston, and takes Miss Eston for Miss Withrington.

Roy. Madam, I have the honour to be your very humble servant.—I hoped to have been here sooner, but I have been so overwhelmed with a multiplicity of affairs; and you know, Madam, when that is the case—

Est. (*taking the word out of his mouth.*) One is never master of one's time for a moment. I'm sure I have been all over the town this morning, looking after a hundred things, till my head has been put into such a confusion! "La, Ma'am!" said my milliner, "do take some lavender drops, you look so pale." "Why," says I, "I don't much like to take them, Mrs. Trollop, they an't always good."

Roy. No more they are, Ma'am, you are very right: and if a silly fellow I know, had taken my advice last year, and bought up the crops of lavender, he would have made—

Est. (*taking the word from him again.*) A very good fortune, I dare say. But people never will take advice, which is very foolish in them, to be sure. Now I always take—

Roy. Be so good as to hear me, Ma'am.

Est. Certainly, Sir; for I always say, if they give me advice it is for my good, and why should not I take it?

Roy. (*edging in his word as fast as he can.*) And the damned foolish fellow too! I once saved him from being cheated in a horse; and—

Est. La! there are such cheats! a friend of mine bought a little lap-dog the other day—

Roy. But the horse, Ma'am, was—

Est. Not worth a guinea, I dare say. Why, they had the impudence to palm it on my friend—

Both speaking together.

Est. As a pretty little dog which had been bred

Roy. It was a good mettled horse, and might

E. up for a lady of quality, and when she had

R have passed as a good purchase at the money,

E. just made a cushion for it at the foot of her

R. but on looking his fore feet—(*Stops short, and lets her go on.*)

E. own bed, she found it was all over mangy. I'm sure I would rather have a plain wholesome cat than the prettiest mangy dog in the kingdom.

Roy. Certainly, Ma'am. And I assure you the horse—for says I to the groom—

Both speaking together.

Est. O! I dare say it was—and who would

Roy. What is the matter with this pastern,

E. have suspected that a dog bred up on

R. Thomas? it looks as if it were rubbed—(*Stops short again, and looks at her with astonishment as she goes on talking.*)

E. purpose for a lady of quality, should be all over so! Nasty creature! It had spots upon its back as large as my watch. (*Taking up her watch.*) O la! I am half an hour after my time. My mantua-maker is waiting for me. Good morning, Sir!

[Exit, *hastily*.

Roy. (*looking after her.*) Clack, clack, clack, clack! What a devil of a tongue she has got! 'Faith! George shall have her, and I'll e'en ask the place for myself. (*Looking out.*) But there is company in the garden: I'll go and join them.

[Exit *to the garden*.

ACT III.

Scene I.—Mr. Withrington's House. A Loud Laughing Without.

Enter Royston, in a great rage.

Roy. Ay ay, laugh away, laugh away, Madam! you'll weep by-and-by, mayhap. (*Pauses and listens; laughing still heard.*) What an infernal noise the jade makes! I wish she had a peck of chaff in her mouth! I am sure it is wide enough to hold it.

Enter Humphry.

Humph. I have been seeking your honour every where—Lord, Sir! I have something to tell you.

Roy. Confound your tales! don't trouble me with a parcel of nonsense.

Humph. (*staring at him and hearing the laughing without.*) For certain, your honour, there's somebody in this house merrier than you or I.

Roy. Damn you, Sir! how do you know I am not merry? Go home, and do what I ordered you directly. If that fellow Jonathan is not in the way, I'll horse-whip him within an inch of his life. Begone, I say; why do you stand staring at me like a madman?

[Exeunt.

Enter Mariane and Agnes, by opposite sides.

Mar. (*holding her sides.*) I shan't be able to laugh again for a month.

Ag. You have got rid of one lover, who will scarcely attempt you a second time. I have met him hurrying through the hall, and muttering to himself like a madman. It is not your refusal of his son that has so roused him.

Mar. No, no; he began his courtship in a doubtful way, as if he would recommend a gay young husband to my choice; but a sly compliment to agreeable men of a middle age, brought him soon to speak plainly for himself.

Ag. But how did you provoke him so?

Mar. I will tell you another time. It is later than I thought. (*Looking at her watch.*)

Ag. Don't go yet. How stands it with you and a certain gentleman I recommended to your notice?

Mar. O! he does not know whether I am tall or short, brown or fair, foolish or sensible, after all the pains I have taken with him; he has eyes, ears, and understanding, for nobody but you, Agnes, and I will attempt him no more. He spoke to me once with animation in his countenance, and I turned round to listen to him eagerly, but it was only to repeat to me something you had just said, which, to deal plainly with you, had not much wit in it neither. I don't know how it is, he seemed to me at first a pleasanter man than he proves to be.

Ag. Say not so, Mariane! he proves to be most admirable!

Mar. Well, be it so, he cannot prove better than I wish him to do, and I can make up my list without him. I have a love-letter from an Irish baronet in my pocket, and Opal will declare himself presently.—I thought once he meant only to plead for his friend; but I would not let him off so, for I know he is a mercenary creature. I have flattered him a little at the expence of Sir Loftus, and

I hope, ere long, to set him up for a great man upon his own bottom.

Ag. So it was only to repeat to you something that I had been saying?

Mar. Ha! you are thinking of this still. I believe, indeed, he sets down every turn of your eye in his memory, and acts it all over in secret.

Ag. Do you think so? give me your hand my dear Mariane; you are a very good cousin to me—Marks every turn of mine eye! I am not quite such an ordinary girl as my uncle says—My complexion is as good as your own, Mariane, if it were not a little sun-burnt. (Mariane *smiles.*) Yes, smile at my vanity as you please; for what makes me vain, makes me so good-humoured too, that I will forgive you. But here comes uncle. (*Skipping as she goes to meet him.*) I am light as an air-ball! (*Enter* Mr. Withrington.) My dear Sir, how long you have been away from us this morning! I am delighted to see you pleased and so happy.

With. (*with a very sour face.*) You are mistaken, young lady, I am not so pleased as you think.

Ag. O no, sir! you are very good-humoured. Isn't he, Mariane?

With. But I say I am in a very bad humour. Get along with your foolery!

Ag. Is it really so? Let me look in your face, uncle. To be sure your brows are a little knit, and your eyes a little gloomy, but that is nothing to be called bad humour; if I could not contrive to look crabbeder than all this comes to, I would never pretend to be ill-humoured in my life. (Mariane *and* Agnes *take him by the hands, and begin to play with him.*)

With. No, no, young ladies, I am not in a mood to be played with. I can't approve of every farce you please to play off in my family; nor to have my relations affronted, and driven from my house for your entertainment.

Mar. Indeed, Sir, I treated Royston better than he deserved; for he would not let me have time to give a civil denial, but ran on planning settlements and jointures, and a hundred things besides: I could just get in my word to stop his career with a flat refusal, as he was about to provide for our descendants of the third generation. O! if you had seen his face then, uncle!

With. I know very well how you have treated him.

Ag. Don't be angry, Sir. What does a man like Royston care for a refusal? he is only angry that he can't take the law of her for laughing at him.

With. Let this be as it may, I don't chuse to have my house in a perpetual bustle from morning till night, with your plots and your pastimes. There is no more order nor distinction kept up in my house, than if it were a cabin in Kamschatka, and common to a whole tribe. In every corner of it I find some visitor, or showman, or milliner's apprentice, loitering about: my best books are cast upon footstools and window-seats, and my library is littered over with work-bags: dogs, cats, and kittens, take possession of every chair, and refuse to be disturbed: and the very beggar children go hopping before my door with their half-eaten scraps in their hands, as if it were the entry to a workhouse.

Ag. (*clapping his shoulder gently.*) Now don't be impatient, my dear Sir, and every thing shall be put into such excellent order as shall delight you to behold. And as for the beggar children, if any of them dare but to set their noses near the house, I'll—What shall I do with them, Sir? (*Pauses and looks in his face, which begins to relent.*) I believe we must not be very severe with them after all. (*Both take his hands and coax him.*)

With. Come, come, off hands, and let me sit down. I am tired of this.

Ag. Yes, uncle, and here is one seat, you see, with no cat upon it. (Withrington *sits down, and* Agnes *takes a little stool and sits down at his feet, curling her nose as she looks up to him, and making a good-humoured face.*)

With. Well, it may be pleasant enough, girls; but allow me to say, all this playing, and laughing, and hoidening about, is not gentlewomanlike; nay, I might say, is not maidenly. A high-bred elegant woman, is a creature which man approaches with awe and respect; but nobody would think of accosting you with such impressions, any more than if you were a couple of young female tinkers.

Ag. Don't distress yourself about this, Sir; we shall get the men to bow to us, and tremble before us too, as well as e'er a hoop petticoat or long ruffles of them all.

With. Tremble before you! ha, ha, ha! (*To* Agnes.) Who would tremble before thee, dost thou think?

Ag. No despicable man, perhaps: What think you of your favourite, Harwood?

With. Poo, poo, poo! he is pleased with thee as an amusing and good-natured creature, and thou thinkest he is in love with thee, forsooth.

Ag. A good-natured creature! he shall think me a vixen and be pleased with me.

With. No, no, not quite so far gone, I believe.

Ag. I'll bet you two hundred pounds that it is so. If I win, you shall pay it to Mariane for wedding trinkets; and if you win, you may build a couple of alms-houses.

With. Well, be it so. We shall see, we shall see.

Mar. Indeed we shall see you lose your bet, uncle.

With. (*to* Mar.) Yes, baggage, I shall have your prayers against me, I know.

Enter SERVANT, and announces MR. OPAL. Enter OPAL.

Op. (*to* Mar.) I hope I have the pleasure of seeing Miss Withrington well this morning. (*Bows distantly to* Withrington, *and still*

more so to Agnes, *after the manner of* Sir Loftus.)

With. Your servant, Sir.

Mar. (*to* Op.) How did you like the ball last night? There was a gay, genteel-looking company.

Op. (*with affected superiority*.) Excepting Lord Saunter, and Lord Poorly, and Sir Loftus, and one or two more of us, I did not know a soul in the room.

With. There were some pretty girls there, Mr. Opal.

Op. I am very glad to hear it, 'pon honour. I did not—(*Mumbling*.)

With. (*aside*.) Affected puppy! I can't bear to look at him. [Exit.

Mar. (*assuming a gayer air as* Withrington *goes out*.) You will soon have a new beau to enrich your circle, Mr. Opal, the handsome and accomplished Colonel Beaumont. He is just returned from abroad, and is now quite the fashion. (*To* Agnes.) Don't you think Mr. Opal resembles him?

Ag. O! very much indeed.

Op. (*bowing very graciously*.) Does he not resemble Sir Loftus too? I mean in his air and his manner.

Mar. O! not at all! That haughty coldness of his is quite old-fashioned now; so unlike the affable frankness so much admired in the Colonel: you have seen him I presume?

Op. I have never had that honour.

Mar. Then you will not be displeased at the likeness we have traced when you do.

Op. (*relaxing from his dignity, and highly pleased*.) The greatest pleasure of my life, Ma'am, will be to resemble what pleases you. (Mariane *gives* Agnes *the wink, and she retires to the bottom of the stage*.)

Mar. You flatter me infinitely.

Op. Ah! call it not flattery, charming Miss Withrington! for now I will have the boldness to own to you frankly, I have been, since the first moment I beheld you, your sincere, your most passionate admired. Upon hon—(*correcting himself*.) 'faith I have!

Mar. Nothing but my own want of merit can make me doubt of any thing Mr. Opal asserts upon his honour or his faith. (*Turning and walking towards the bottom of the stage, whilst* Opal *follows her talking in dumb show; then* Agnes *joins them, and they all come forward to the front*.)

Ag. (*to* Mar.) How much that turn of his head puts me in mind of the Colonel!

Mar. So it does, my Agnes. (*To* Opal.) Pray have the goodness to hold it so for a moment! There now, it is just the very thing. (Opal *holds his head in a constrained ridiculous posture, and then makes a conceited bow*.) His very manner of bowing too! one would swear it was him!

Ag. Yes, only the Colonel is more familiar, more easy in his carriage.

Op. O! Ma'am! I assure you I have formerly—It is my natural manner to be remarkably easy—But I—(*pauses*.)

Mar. Have never condescended to assume any other than your natural manner, I hope.

Op. O! not at all, I detest affectation; there is nothing I detest so much—But upon my soul! I can't tell how it is, I have been graver of late. I am, indeed, sometimes thoughtful.

Mar. O fy upon it! don't be so any more. It is quite old-fashioned and ridiculous now. (*To* Agnes, *winking significantly*.) Did you see my gloves any where about the room, cousin?

Op. I'll find them. (*Goes to look for them with great briskness*—Servant *announces* Miss Eston.)

Op. Pest take her! I stared at her once in a mistake, and she has ogled and followed me ever since.

Enter Miss Eston, running up to Mariane and Agnes, and pretending not to see Opal, though she cannot help looking askance at him while she speaks.

Est. O my dear creatures! you can't think how I have longed to see you. Mrs. Thomson kept me so long this morning, and you know she is an intolerable talker. (*Pretending to discover* Opal.) O! how do you do, Mr. Opal? I declare I did not observe you!

Op. (*with a distant haughty bow*.) I am obliged to you, Ma'am.

Est. I did see your figure, indeed, but I mistook it for Sir Loftus.

Op. (*correcting himself and assuming a cheerful frank manner*.) O Ma'am! you are very obliging to observe me at all. I believe Prettyman and I may be nearly of the same height. (*Looking at his watch*.) I am beyond my appointment, I see. Excuse me; I must hurry away. [Exit, *hastily*.

Est. (*looking after him with marks of disappointment*.) I am very glad he is gone. He does so haunt me, and stare at me, I am quite tired of it. The first time I ever saw him, you remember how he looked me out of countenance. I was resolved before I came not to take notice of him.

Mar. So you knew you should find him here, then.

Est. O la! one don't know of a morning who one may meet; as likely him as any body else, you know. I really wonder now what crotchet he has taken into his head about me. Do you know, last night, before twilight, I peeped over the blind, and saw him walking with slow pensive steps under my window.

Mar. Well, what happened then?

Est. I drew in my head, you may be sure; but a little while after, I peeped out again, and, do you know, I saw him coming out of the perfumer's shop, just opposite my dressing-room, where he had been all the while.

Mar. Very well, and what happened next?

Est. La! nothing more. But was it not very odd? What should he be doing all that time in that little paltry shop? The great

shop near the Circus is the place where every body buys perfumery.

Ag. No, there is nothing very odd in Mr. Opal's buying perfumes at a very paltry shop, where he might see and be seen by a very pretty lady.

Est. (*with her face brightning up*.) Do you think so? O no! you don't?

Ag. To be sure I do. But I know what is very strange.

Est. O la, dear creature! What is it?

Ag. He bought his perfumes there before you came, when there was no such inducement. Is not that very odd? (Eston *pauses, and looks silly*.)

Enter Mr. WITHRINGTON, but upon perceiving Eston bows and retreats again.

Est. (*recovering herself*.) Ha! how do you do, Mr. Withrington? I have just seen your friend, Lady Fade. Poor dear soul! she says—

With. I am sorry, Ma'am, it is not in my power at present—I am in a hurry, I have an appointment. Your servant, Ma'am. [EXIT.

Est. Well, now this is very odd! Wherever I go, I find all the men just going out to some appointment. O, I forgot to tell you, Mrs. Thomson has put a new border to her drawing-room, just like the one up stairs. Has it not a dark blue ground? (*To* Mariane.)

Mar. I'm sure I cannot tell, let us go up stairs and see [EXEUNT.

SCENE II.—BEFORE MR. WITHRINGTON'S HOUSE.

Enter HARWOOD.

Well, here I am again, yet devil take me if I can muster up resolution enough to touch the knocker! what a fool was I to call twice this morning! for with what face can I now visit her again? The old gentleman will look strangely at me; the fine heiress her cousin will stare at me; nay, the very servants begin already to smile with impertinent significance, as I inquire with conscious foolishness, if the ladies are at home. Then Agnes herself will look so drolly at me—Ah! but she will look so pleasantly too!—'Faith! I'll e'en go. (*Goes to the door, puts his hand up to the knocker, stops short, and turns from it again. Pauses*.) What a fool am I, to stand thinking about it here. If I were but fairly in the room with her, and the first salutation over, I should not care if the devil himself made faces at me. Oh no! every body is good-humoured, every thing is happy that is near her! the kitten who plays by her side takes hold of her gown unchidden. How pleasant it is to love what is so blessed! I should hate the fairest woman on earth if she were not of a sweet temper. Come, come; every thing favours me here, but my own foolish fancies. (*As he goes to the door again, it opens, and enters from the house*, Betty, *crying, with a bundle in her hand*.)

Bet. O dear me! O dear me!

Har. What is the matter with you, my good girl?

Bet. I'm sure it was not my fault, and she has abused me worser than a heathen.

Har. That is hard indeed.

Bet. Indeed it is, Sir; and all for a little nasty essence-bottle, which was little better than a genteel kind of a stink at the best; and I am sure I did but take out the stopper to smell to it, when it came to pieces in my hand like an egg-shell. If bottles will break, how can I help it? but la! Sir, there is no speaking reason to my mistress; she is as furious and as ill-tempered as a dragon.

Har. Don't distress yourself; Miss Agnes Withrington will make amends to you for the severity of your mistress.

Bet. She truly! it is she herself who is my mistress, and she has abused me—O dear me! —If it had been Miss Withrington, she would not have said a word to me; but Miss Agnes is so cross, and so ill-natured, there is no living in the house with her.

Har. Girl, you are beside yourself!

Bet. No, Sir, God be praised! but she is beside herself, I believe. Does she think I am going to live in her service to be call'd names so, and compared to a blackamoor too? If I had been waiting-maid to the queen, she would not have compared me to a blackamoor, and will I take such usage from her? —what do I care for her cast gowns?

Har. Well, but she is liberal to you?

Bet. She liberal! she'll keep every thing that is worth keeping to herself, I warrant; and Lord pity those who are bound to live with her! I'll seek out a new place for myself, and let the devil, if he will, wait upon her next, in the shape of a blackamoor: they will be fit company for one another; and if he gets the better of her at scolding, he is a better devil than I take him for. And I am sure, Sir, if you were to see her—

Har. Get along! get along! you are too passionate yourself, to be credited.

Bet. I know what I know; I don't care what nobody says, no more I do; I know who to complain to. [EXIT, *grumbling*.

Har. (*alone*.) What a malicious toad it is! I dare say now, she has done something very provoking. I cannot bear these pert chambermaids; the very sight of them is offensive to me.

Enter JONATHAN.

Jon. Good evening to your honour; can you tell me if Mr. Withrington be at home? for as how, my master has sent me with a message to him.

Har. (*impatiently*.) Go to the house and inquire; I know nothing about it. (Jonathan *goes to the house*.)

Har. (*alone, after musing some time*.) That girl has put me out of all heart though, with her cursed stories.—No, no, it cannot be—it is impossible?

Re-enter JONATHAN from the house, scratching his head, and looking behind him.

Jon. 'Faith there is hot work going on amongst them! thank heaven I am out again.

Har. What do you mean?

Jon. 'Faith! that little lady, in that there house, is the best hand at a scold, saving Mary Macmurrock, my wife's mother, that ever my two blessed eyes looked upon. Lord Sir, (*going nearer him*) her tongue goes ting, ting, ting, as shrill as the bell of any pieman; and then, Sir, (*going nearer him*) her two eyes look out of her head, as though they were a couple of glow-worms! and then, Sir, he, he, he! (*laughing and going close up to him.*) She claps her little hands so, as if—

Har. Shut your fool's mouth and be damned to you! (*Kicks* Jonathan *off the stage in a violent passion; then leans his back to a tree, and seems thoughtful for some time and very much troubled.*)

Enter AGNES from the house, with a stormy look on her face.

Ag. So you are still loitering here, Harwood? you have been very much amused, I suppose, with the conversation of those good folks you have talked with.

Har. No, not much amused, Madam, though somewhat astonished, I own; too much astonished, indeed, to give it any credit.

Ag. Oh! it is true though; I have been very cross with the girl, and very cross with every body; and if you don't clear up that dismal face of yours, I shall be cross with you too: what could possess you to stay so long under the chestnut-tree, a little while ago, always appearing as if you were coming to the house, and always turning back again?

Har. (*eagerly.*) And is it possible, you were then looking at me, and observing my motions?

Ag. Indeed I was just going to open my window and beckon to you, when that creature broke my phial of sweet essence, and put me quite out of temper.

Har. Hang the stupid jade! I could—

Ag. So you are angry too? O! well done! we are fit company for one another. Come along with me, come, come! (*impatiently. As she turns to go, something catches hold of her gown.*) What is this? confounded thing! (*Pulls away her gown in a passion, and tears it.*)

Har. (*aside.*) Witch that she is! she should be beaten for her humours. I will not go with her.

Ag. (*looking behind.*) So you won't go in with me? good evening to you then: we did want a fourth person to make up a party with us; but since you don't like it, we shall send to Sir Loftus, or Opal, or Sir Ulock O'Grady, or some other good creature; I dare say Sir Loftus will come.

Har. (*half aside.*) Cursed coxcomb! If he sets his snout within the door, I'll pistol him.

Ag. (*overhearing him.*) Ha! well said! you will make the best company in the world. Come along, come along! (*He follows her half unwillingly.*) Why don't you offer your arm here? don't you see how rough it is? (*He offers his arm.*) Poo, not that arm! (*Offers her the other.*) Poo, not so neither, on t'other side of me.

Har. What a humoursome creature you are! I have offer'd you two arms, and neither of them will do; do you think I have a third to offer you!

Ag. You are a simpleton, or you would have half a dozen at my service.

[EXEUNT *into the house.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—HARWOOD'S LODGINGS. HE IS DISCOVERED WALKING ABOUT WITH AN IRREGULAR DISTURBED STEP, HIS HAIR AND DRESS ALL NEGLECTED AND IN DISORDER; HE COMES FORWARD TO THE FRONT OF THE STAGE.

Har. I have neither had peace nor sleep since I beheld her; O! that I had never known her! or known her only such as my first fond fancy conceived her!—I would my friend were come; I will open my heart to him; he perhaps will speak comfort to me; for surely that temper must be violent indeed, which generous affection cannot subdue; and she must be extravagant beyond all bounds of nature, who would ruin the fond husband who toils for her. No, no, nature makes not such, but when she sets her scowling mark upon their forehead to warn us from our ruin. (*Pauses, walks up and down, then comes forward again.*) Insipid constitutional good nature is a tiresome thing: passion subdued by reason is worth a score of it—and passion subdued by love?—O! that were better still!—yesterday, as I enter'd her door, I heard her name me to her cousin, with so much gentle softness in her voice, I blest her as she spoke. —Ah! if this were so, all might still be well. Who would not struggle with the world for such a creature as this?—Ay, and I must struggle!—O! that this head of mine would give over thinking but for one half hour! (*Rings the bell.*)

Enter THOMAS.

What brings you here, Thomas?

Thom. Your bell rung, Sir.

Har. Well, well, I did want something, but I have forgot it. Bring me a glass of water. [EXIT Thomas. Harwood *sits down by a small writing-table, and rests his head upon his hand. Re-enter* Thomas *with the water.*) You have made good haste, Thomas.

Thom. I did make good haste, Sir, lest you should be impatient with me.

Har. I am sometimes impatient with you,

then? I fear indeed I have been too often so of late; but you must not mind it, Thomas, I mean you no unkindness.

Thom. Lord love you, Sir! I know that very well! A young gentleman who takes an old man into his service, because other gentlemen do not think him quick enough, nor smart enough for them, as your honour has taken me, can never mean to show him any unkindness: I know it well enough; I am only uneasy because I fear you are not so well of late.

Har. I thank you, Thomas, I am not very well—I am not ill neither; I shall be better. *(Pauses.)* I think I have heard you say, you were a soldier in your youth?

Thom. Yes, Sir.

Har. And you had a wife too, a woman of fiery mettle, to bear about your knapsack?

Thom. Yes, Sir, my little stout spirity Jane; she had a devil of a temper, to be sure.

Har. Yet you loved her notwithstanding?

Thom. Yes, to be sure I did, as it were, bear her some kindness.

Har. I'll be sworn you did!—and you would have been very sorry to have parted with her.

Thom. Why death parts the best of friends, Sir; we lived but four years together.

Har. And so your little spirity Jane was taken so soon away from you? Give me thy hand, my good Thomas. *(Takes his hand and presses it.)*

Thom. *(perceiving tears in his eyes.)* Lord, Sir! don't be so distressed about it: she did die, to be sure; but truly, between you and I, although I did make a kind of whimpering at the first, I was not ill pleased afterwards to be rid of her; for, truly, Sir, a man who has got an ill-tempered wife, has but a dog's life of it at the best.—Will you have your glass of water, Sir?

Har. *(looking at him with dissatisfaction.)* No, no, take it away; I have told you a hundred times not to bring me that chalky water from the court-yard. *(Turns away from him.)*

Enter Colonel Hardy.—Harwood makes signs to Thomas, and he goes out.

Har. My dear Colonel, this is kind: I am very glad to see you.

Col. It is so seldom that a young fellow has any inclination for the company of an old man, that I should feel myself vain of the summons you have sent me, were I not afraid, from this dishabille, my dear Harwood, that you are indisposed.

Har. You are very good; I am not indisposed. I have indeed been anxious—I rested indifferently last night—I hope I see you well.

Col. Very well, as you may guess from the speed I have made in coming to you. These legs do not always carry me so fast. But you have something particular to say to me.

Har. I am very sensible of your friendship. —Pray, Colonel, be seated.—*(They sit down —a long pause—*Colonel Hardy, *like one expecting to hear something;* Harwood, *like one who knows not how to begin.)*—There are moments in a man's life, Colonel Hardy, when the advice of a friend is of the greatest value; particularly one, who has also been his father's friend.

Col. My heart very warmly claims both those relations to you, Harwood; and I shall be happy to advise you as well as I am able.

Har. *(after another pause.)* I am about to commence a laborious profession.—The mind is naturally anxious—*(Pauses.)*

Col. But you are too capable of exercising well that profession, to suffer much uneasiness.

Har. Many a man with talents superiour to mine has sunk beneath the burden.

Col. And many a man, with talents vastly inferiour to yours, has borne it up with credit.

Har. Ah! what avails the head with an estranged heart?

Col. You are disgusted then with your profession, and have perhaps, conceived more favourably of mine? I am sorry for it: I hoped to see you make a figure at the bar; and your mother has long set her heart upon it.

Har. *(with energy.)* O, no! she must not—she shall not be disappointed!—Pardon me, my expressions have gone somewhat wide of my meaning.—I meant to have consulted you in regard to other difficulties—

Col. And pardon me likewise for interrupting you; but it appears to me, that an unlearned soldier is not a person to be consulted in these matters.

Har. It was not altogether of these matters I meant to speak—But, perhaps, we had better put it off for the present.

Col. No, no!

Har. Perhaps we had better walk out a little way: we may talk with less restraint as we go.

Col. No, no, there are a thousand impertinent people about. Sit down again, and let me hear every thing you wish to say.

Har. *(pausing, hesitating, and much embarrassed.)* There are certain attachments in which a man's heart may be so deeply interested—I would say so very—or rather I should say so strangely engaged, that—*(hesitates and pauses.)*

Col. O, here it is! I understand it now. But pray don't be so foolish about it, Harwood! You are in love?

Har. *(appearing relieved.)* I thank your quickness, my dear Colonel; I fear it is somewhat so with me.

Col. And whence your fear? Not from the lady's cruelty?

Har. No, there is another bar in my way, which does, perhaps too much depress my hopes of happiness.

Col. You have not been prudent enough to fall in love with an heiress?

Har. No, my dear Sir, I have not.

Col. That is a great mistake, to be sure Harwood; yet many a man has not advanced the less rapidly in his profession, for having had a portionless wife to begin the world with. It is a spur to industry.

Har. (*looking pleased at him.*) Such sentiments are what I expected from Colonel Hardy; and, were it not for female failings, there would be little risk in following them—I don't know how to express it—I am perhaps too delicate in these matters—We ought not to expect a faultless woman.

Col. No, surely; and, if such a woman were to be found, she would be no fit companion for us.

Har. (*getting up, and pressing the Colonel's hand between his.*) My dearest friend! your liberality and candour delight me!—I do indeed believe that many a man has lived very happily with a woman far from being faultless; and, after all, where is the great injury he sustains, if she should be a little violent and unreasonable?

Col. (*starting up from his seat.*) Nay, Heaven defend us from a violent woman; for that is the devil himself!—(*Seeing* Harwood's *countenance change.*)—What is the matter with you, Harwood? She is not ill-temper'd, I hope?

Har. (*hesitating.*) Not—not absolutely so—She is of a very quick and lively disposition, and is apt to be too hasty and unguarded in her emotions.—I do not, perhaps, make myself completely understood.

Col. O! I understand you perfectly.—I have known ladies of this lively disposition, very hasty and unguarded too in their demands upon a man's pocket as well as his patience; but she may be of a prudent and economical turn. Is it so, Harwood?

Har. (*throwing himself into a chair very much distressed.*) I do not say it is, Colonel.

Col. (*putting his hand kindly upon his shoulder.*) I am sorry to distress you so much, my dear friend, yet it must be so. I see how it is with you: pardon the freedom of friendship, but indeed an expensive and violent temper'd woman is not to be thought of: he who marries such a one forfeits all peace and happiness. Pluck up some noble courage, and renounce this unfortunate connexion.

Har. (*starting up.*) Renounce it, Colonel Hardy? Is it from you I receive so hard, so unfeeling a request, who has suffered so much yourself from the remembrance of an early attachment? I thought to have been pitied by you.

Col. I was early chagrined with the want of promotion, and disappointed in my schemes of ambition, which gave my countenance something of a melancholy cast, I believe, and the ladies have been kind enough to attribute it to the effects of hopeless love; but how could you be such a ninny, my dear Harwood?

Har. I am sorry, Sir, we have understood one another so imperfectly.

Col. Nay, nay, my young friend, do not carry yourself so distantly with me. You have sought a love-lorn companion, and you have found a plain-spoken friend. I am sorry to give you pain: deal more openly with me: when I know who this bewitching creature is, I shall, perhaps, judge more favourably of your passion.

Har. It is Miss Agnes Withrington.

Col. Cousin to Miss Withrington the heiress?

Har. Yes, it is she. What have I said to amaze you?

Col. You amaze me, indeed!—That little—forgive me if I were almost to say,—plain-looking girl! Friendship would sympathize in your feelings; but, pardon me, Harwood, you have lost your wits.

Har. I believe I have, Colonel, which must plead my pardon, likewise, for expecting this friendship from you.

Col. You distress me.

Har. I distress myself still more, by suffering so long the pain of this conversation.

Col. Let us end it, then, as soon as you please. When you are in a humour to listen to reason, I shall be happy to have the honour of seeing you.

Har. When I am in that humour, Sir, I will not balk it so much as to intrude upon your time.

Col. Let me see you, then, when you are not in that humour, and I shall more frequently have the pleasure of your company. (*Both bow coldly.* Exit Colonel Hardy.)

Har. (*alone.*) What a fool was I to send for this man!—A little plain-looking girl! What do the people mean? They w''' drive me mad amongst them. Why does not the little witch wear high heels to her shoes, and stick a plume of feathers in her cap? Oh! they will drive me distracted! Exit.

Scene II.—Mr. Withrington's house. Agnes discovered embroidering at a small table, Harwood standing by her, and hanging fondly over her as she works.

Har. How pretty it is! Now you put a little purple on the side of the flower.

Ag. Yes, a very little shade.

Har. And now a little brown upon that.

Ag. Even so.

Har. And thus you work up and down, with that tiny needle of yours, till the whole flower is completed. (*Pauses, still looking at her working.*) Why, Agnes, you little witch! you're doing that leaf wrong.

Ag. You may pick it out then, and do it better for me. I'm sure you have been idle enough all the morning, it is time you were employed about something.

Har. And so I will. (*sitting down by her, and taking hold of the work*)

Ag. (*covering the flower with her hand.*) O! nò, no!

Har. Take away that little perverse hand, and let me begin. (*Putting his hand upon hers.*)

Ag. What a good for nothing creature you are! you can do nothing yourself, and you will suffer nobody else to do any thing. I should have had the whole pattern finished before now, if you had not loitered over my chair so long.

Har. So you can't work when I look over you! Then I have some influence upon you? O you sly girl! you are caught in your own words at last.

Ag. Indeed, Harwood, I wish you would go home again to your law-books and your precedent hunting; you have mispent a great deal of time here already.

Har. Is it not better to be with you in reality than only in imagination? Ah! Agnes! you little know what my home studies are.—Law, said you! how can I think of law, when your countenance looks upon me from every black lettered page that I turn? when your figure fills the empty seat by my side, and your voice speaks to me in the very mid-day stillness of my chamber? Ah! my Agnes! you will not believe what a foolish fellow I have been, since I first saw you.

Ag. Nay, Harwood, I am not at all incredulous of the fact; it is only the cause of it which I doubt.

Har. Saucy girl! I must surely be revenged upon you for all this.

Ag. I am tired of this work. (*Getting up.*)

Har. O! do not give over.—Let me do something fo ou—Let me thread your needle for you I can thread one most nobly.

Ag. There then. (*Gives him a needle and silk.*)

Har. (*pretending to scratch her hand with it.*) So ought you to be punished. (*Threads it awkwardly.*)

Ag. Ay, nobly done, indeed! but I shall work no more to-day.

Har. You must work up my needleful.

Ag. I am to work a fool's cap in the corner by-and-by; I shall keep your needleful for that. I am going to walk in the garden.

Har. And so am I.

Ag. You are?

Har. Yes, I am. Go where you will, Agnes, to the garden or the field, the city or the desert, by sea or by land, I must e'en go too. I will never be where you are not, but when to be where you are is impossible.

Ag. There will be no getting rid of you at this rate, unless some witch will have pity upon me, and carry me up in the air upon her broomstick.

Har. There, I will not pretend to follow you; but as long as you remain upon the earth, Agnes, I cannot find in my heart to budge an inch from your side.

Ag. You are a madman!

Har. You are a sorceress!

Ag. You are an idler!

Har. You are a little mouse!

Ag. Come, come, get your hat then, and let us go. (*Aside, while he goes to the bottom of the stage for his hat.*) Bless me! I have forgot to be ill-humour'd all this time.

[Exit, *hastily.*

Har. (*coming forward.*) Gone for her cloak, I suppose. How delightful she is! how pleasant every change of her countenance! How happy must his life be, spent even in cares and toil, whose leisure hours are cheered with such a creature as this.

Ag. (*without in an angry voice.*) Don't tell me so; I know very well how it is, and you shall smart for it too, you lazy, careless, impudent fellow! And, besides all this, how dare you use my kitten so?

Har. (*who listened with a rueful face.*) Well, now, but this is humanity: she will not have a creature ill-used.—I wish she would speak more gently though.

Ag. (*entering.*) Troublesome, provoking, careless fellow!

Har. It is very provoking in him to use the poor kitten ill.

Ag. So it is; but it is more provoking still to mislay my clogs, as he does.

Enter Servant with clogs.

Ser. Here they are, Madam.

Ag. Bring them here I say; (*looks at them.*) These are Miss Withrington's clogs, you blockhead! (*Throws them to the other side of the stage in a passion.*) I must go without them, I find. (*To* Harwood.) What are you musing about? If you don't choose to go with me, good morning.

Har. (*sighing deeply.*) Ah, Agnes! you know too well that I cannot stay behind you.

[Exeunt.

Scene III.—Miss Withrington's Dressing-room.

Enter Mariane, who turns back again towards the door, and calls to Agnes without.

Mar. Agnes, cousin Agnes! where are you going?

Ag. (*without.*) I am returning to Miss Eston, whom I have left in the parlour, talking to the dog.

Mar. Well, let her talk to the dog a little longer, and let me talk to you.

Enter Agnes.

I have set Betty to watch at the higher windows to give notice of Sir Loftus's approach, that we may put ourselves in order to receive him; for I am resolved to have one bout more with him, and discharge him for good: I am quite tired of him now.

Ag. Do you expect him?

Mar. I am pretty sure he will come about this time, and I must be prepared for him. I have a good mind to tell him at once, I des-

pise him, and that will be a plain easy way of finishing the business.

Ag. No, no, my sweet Mariane! we must send him off with eclat. You have played your part very well hitherto; keep it up but for the last time, and let Miss Eston and I go into the closet and enjoy it.

Mar. Well then, do so: I shall please you for this once.

Enter Betty in haste.

Bet. (*to* Mar.) Sir Loftus is just coming up the side path, Madam, and he'll be at the door immediately.

Ag. I'll run and bring Eston directly.

[Exit.

Mar. (*looking at the door of the closet.*) Yes, it is very thin: they will hear well, and see through the key-hole.

Re-enter Agnes with Miss Eston, in a great hurry.

Est. La! I have torn my gown in my haste.

Ag. Come along, come along!

Est. It is not so bad a tear though as Mrs. Thomson got the—

Ag. Come, come, we must not stay here. (*Pushes* Eston *into the closet, and follows.* Mariane *and* Betty *place a table with books and a chair, near the front of the stage.*)

Est. (*looking from the closet.*) La! Mariane, how I long to hear you and him begin. I shall be so delighted!

Mar. For heaven's sake shut the door! he will be here immediately. (*Shuts the door upon her, and continues to put the room in order.*)

Est. (*looking out again.*) La! Mariane, do you know how many yards of point Lady Squat has got round her new—(Agnes *from behind, claps her hand on* Eston's *mouth, and draws her into the closet.*—Mariane *sets herself by the table, pretending to read.* Exit Betty, *and enter* Sir Loftus, *a servant announcing him.*)

Sir Loft. You are very studious this morning, Miss Withrington.

Mar. (*carelessly.*) Ha! how do you do?

Sir Loft. You have been well amus'd, I hope?

Mar. So, so. I must put in a mark here, and not lose my place. (*Looking on the table.*) There is no paper—O, there is some on the other table: pray do fetch it me! (*Pointing to a table at the bottom of the stage.*) I am very lazy. (*Sits down again indolently.*)

Sir Loft. (*fetching the paper, and presenting it with a condescending yet self-important air.*) I have the honour to obey you, Ma'am.

Mar. I thank you; you are a very serviceable creature, I am sure.

Sir Loft. (*drawing himself up proudly but immediately correcting himself.*) I am always happy to serve Miss Withrington.

Mar. O! I know very well the obliging turn of your disposition. (*Tosses her arm upon the table and throws down her book.*) I am very stupid this morning. (Sir Loftus *picks up the book, and gives it to her rather sulkily; and she in receiving it drops an ivory ball under the table.*) Bless me! what is the matter with all these things? pray lift it for me, good Sir Loftus! I believe you must creep under the table for it, though. (*He stoops under the table with a very bad grace, and she slyly gives it a touch with her foot, which makes it run to the other side of the stage.*) Nay, you must go farther off for it now. I am very troublesome.

Sir Loft. (*goes after it rather unwillingly, and presenting it to her with still a worse grace.*) Madam this is more honour than I—(*mumbling.*)

Mar. O, no! Sir Loftus, it is only you that are too good. (*Lolling carelessly in her chair.*) It is so comfortable to have such a good creature by one! your fine fashionable men are admired to be sure, but I don't know how, I feel always restrained in their company. With a good obliging creature like you now, I can be quite at my ease; I can just desire you to do any thing.

Sir Loft. Upon my honour, Madam, you flatter me very much indeed. Upon my honour, I must say, I am rather at a loss to conceive how I have merited these commendations.

Mar. O! Sir Loftus, you are too humble, too diffident of yourself. I know very well the obliging turn of your disposition to every body.

Sir Loft. (*aside.*) Damn it! is she an idiot! (*aloud.*) Your good opinion, Madam, does me a great deal of honour, but I assure you, Ma'am, it is more than I deserve. I have great pleasure in serving Miss Withrington;—to be at the service of every body is an extent of benevolence I by no means pretend to.

Mar. Now why are you so diffident, Sir Loftus? did not old Mrs. Mumblecake tell me the other day, how you ran nine times to the apothecary's to fetch green salve to rub her monkey's tail?

Sir Loft. She told you a damned lie then! (*Biting his lip, and walking up and down with hasty strides*) Damn it! this is beyond all bearing! I run nine times to the apothecary's to fetch green salve for her monkey's tail! If the cursed hag says so again I'll bury her alive!

Mar. Nay, don't be angry about it. I'm sure I thought it very good in you, and I said so to every body.

Sir Loft. You have been obliging enough to tell it to all the world too?

Mar. And why should I not have the pleasure of praising you?

Sir Loft. Hell and the devil! (*Turning on his heel, and striding up and down, and muttering as he goes whilst she sits carelessly with her arms crossed.*)

Mar. My good Sir Loftus, you will tire yourself. Had you not better be seated?

Sir Loft. (endeavouring to compose himself.) The influence you have over me, Ma'am, gets the better of every thing. I would not have you mistake my character, however; if love engages me in your service, you ought so to receive it. I have been less profuse of these attentions to women of the very first rank and fashion; I might therefore have hoped that you would lend a more favourable ear to my passion.

Mar. Indeed you wrong me. You don't know how favourably my ear may be disposed: sit down here and tell me all about it. (Sir Loftus *revolts again at her familiarity, but stifles his pride and sits down by her.*)

Sir Loft. Permit me to say, Madam, that it is time we should come to an explanation of each other's sentiments.

Mar. Whenever you please, Sir.

Sir Loft. (bowing.) I hope then, I may be allowed to presume, that my particular attentions to you, pardon me, Ma'am, have not been altogether disagreeable to you.

Mar. O! not at all, Sir Loftus.

Sir Loft. (bowing again.) I will presume then still farther, Ma'am, and declare to you, that from the very day which gave birth to my passion, I have not ceased to think of you with the most ardent tenderness.

Mar. La! Sir Loftus, was it not of a Wednesday?

Sir Loft. (fretted.) Upon my word I am not so very accurate: it might be Wednesday, or Friday, or any day.

Mar. Of a Friday, do you think? it runs strangely in my head that we saw one another first of a Wednesday.

Sir Loft. (very much fretted.) I say, Ma'am, the day which gave birth to my love—

Mar. O! very true! you might see me first of a Wednesday, and yet not fall in love with me till the Friday. (Sir Loftus *starts up in a passion, and strides up and down.*—Mariane *rising from her seat carelessly.*) I wonder where William has put the nuts I bought for Miss Eston's squirrel. I think I hear a mouse in the wainscot. (*Goes to the bottom of the room, and opens a small cabinet, whilst* Sir Loftus *comes forward to the front.*)

Sir Loft. (aside.) Damn her freaks! I wish the devil had the wooing of her! *(Pauses.)* I must not lose her for a trifle though; but when she is once secured, I'll be revenged! I'll vex her! I'll drive the spirit out of her! (*Aloud as she comes forward.*) My passion for you, Miss Withrington, is too generous and disinterested to merit this indifference.

Mar. I'm glad they have not eat the nuts though.

Sir Loft. (aside.) Curse her and her nuts! I'll tame her! (*aloud.*) My sentiments for you, Ma'am, are of so delicate and tender a nature, they do indeed deserve your indulgence. Tell me then, can the most disinterested, the most fervent love, make any impression on your heart? I can no longer exist in this state of anxiety! at your feet let me implore you—(*Seems about to kneel, but rather unwillingly, as if he wished to be prevented.*)

Mar. Pray, Sir Loftus, don't kneel there! my maid has spilt oil on the floor.

Sir Loft. Since you will not permit me to have the pleasure of kneeling at—

Mar. Nay, I will not deprive you of the pleasure—There is no oil spilt here. (*Pointing to a part of the floor very near the closet-door.*)

Sir Loft. I see it would be disagreeable to you.

Mar. I see very well you are not inclined to condescend so far.

Sir Loft. (kneeling directly.) Believe me, Madam, the pride, the pleasure of my life, is to be devoted to the most adorable—(Mariane *gives a significant cough, and* Agnes *and* Eston *burst from the closet: the door opening on the outside, comes against* Sir Loftus *as he kneels, and lays him sprawling on the floor.*)

Ag. Est. and Mar. (speaking together.) O Sir Loftus! poor Sir Loftus! (*All coming about him pretending to assist him to get up.*)

Sir Loft. Damn their bawling! they will bring the whole family here!

Enter Mr. Withrington and Opal: Sir Loftus, mad with rage, makes a desperate effort, and gets upon his legs. Opal stands laughing at him without any ceremony, whilst he bites his lips, and draws himself up haughtily.

Mar. (to Sir Loft.*)* I'm afraid you have hurt yourself?

Sir Loft. (shortly.) No, Ma'am.

Ag. Hav'nt you rubbed the skin off your shins, Sir Loftus?

Sir Loft. No, Ma'am.

Ag. I am sure he has hurt his nose, but he is ashamed to own it.

Sir Loft. Neither shin nor nose! Devil take it!

With. Get along, girls, and don't torment this poor man any longer. I am afraid, Sir Loftus, the young gipsies have been making a fool of you.

Sir Loft. Sir, it is neither in your power nor theirs to make a fool of me.

Op. Ha, ha, ha, ha! 'Faith Prettyman, you must forgive me! ha, ha, ha, ha! I never thought in my life to have caught you at such low prostrations. But don't be so angry, though you do make a confounded silly figure, it must be confessed. Ha, ha, ha, ha!

Sir Loft. (to Op.*)* Sir, your impertinence and yourself are equally contemptible; and I desire you would no longer take the trouble of intruding yourself into my company, nor of affronting me, as you have hitherto done, with your awkward imitation of my figure and address.

Op. What the devil do you mean? I imitate your figure and address! I scorn to—I will not deny that I may have insensibly acquired a little of them both, for—for—(*Hesitating.*)

Ag. For he has observed people laughing at him of late.

Sir. Loft. (*turning on his heel.*) He is beneath my resentment.

Mar. Be not so angry, good Sir Loftus! let us end this business for the present; and when I am at leisure to hear the remainder of your declarations, which have been so unfortunately interrupted, I'll send and let you know.

Sir Loft. No, 'Faith Madam! you have heard the last words I shall ever say to you upon the subject. A large fortune may make amends for an ordinary person, Madam, but not for vulgarity and impertinence. Good morning! (*Breaks from them, and* Exit, *leaving them laughing provokingly behind him.*)

With. (*shaking his head.*) This is too bad, this is too bad, young ladies! I am ashamed to have all this rioting and absurdity going on in my house.

Ag. Come away, uncle, and see him go down the back walk, from the parlour windows. I'll warrant you he'll stride it away most nobly. (Withrington *follows shrugging up his shoulders.*) [Exeunt.

ACT V.

Scene I.—Mr. Withrington's Library. Mr. Withrington discovered seated by a table.

With. Who waits there? (*Enter* Servant.) Tell Miss Agnes Withrington I wish to see her. [Exit *Servant.*] What an absurd fellow this Harwood is, to be so completely bewitched with such a girl as Agnes! If she were like the women I remember, there would indeed be some—(Agnes *entering softly behind him, gives him a tap on the shoulder.*)

Ag. Well, uncle, what are you grumbling about? Have you lost your wager? Harwood has just left you, I hear.

With. I believe you may buy those trinkum trankum ornaments for Mariane whenever you please.

Ag. Pray look not so ungraciously upon the matter! But you can't forgive him, I suppose, for being such a ninny as to fall in love with a little ordinary girl, eh?

With. And so he is a ninny, and a fool, and a very silly fellow.

Ag. Do tell me what he has been saying to you.

With. Why, he confesses thou art ill-tempered, that thou art freakish, that thou art extravagant; and that of all the friends he has spoken with upon the subject, there is not one who will allow thee beauty enough to make a good-looking dairy-maid.

Ag. Did he say so?

With. Why, something nearly equivalent to it, Agnes. Yet, notwithstanding all this, there is something about thee, so unaccountably delightful to him, that, poor as thou art, he will give up the fair hopes of opulence, and the pleasures of freedom, to watch for thee, bear with thee, drudge for thee, if thou wilt have the condescension, in return, to plague and torment him for life.

Ag. Foolish enough indeed! yet Heaven bless him for it! What a fortunate woman am I! I sought a disinterested lover, and I have found a most wonderful one.

With. I dare say you think yourself very fortunate.

Ag. And don't you, likewise, my good Sir? but you seem displeased at it.

With. You guess rightly enough: I must speak without disguise, Agnes; I am not pleased.

Ag. Ah! his want of fortune—

With. Poo! you know very well I despise all mercenary balancing of property. It is not that which disturbs me. To be the disinterested choice of a worthy man is what every woman, who means to marry at all, would be ambitious of; and a point in regard to her marriage, which a woman of fortune would be unwilling to leave doubtful. But there are men whose passions are of such a violent overbearing nature, that love in them may be considered as a disease of the mind; and the object of it claims no more perfection or pre-eminence amongst women, than chalk, lime, or oatmeal do amongst dainties, because some diseased stomachs do prefer them to all things. Such men as these we sometimes see attach themselves even to ugliness and infamy, in defiance of honour and decency. With such men as these, women of sense and refinement can never be happy; nay, to be willingly the object of their love is disrespectable. (*Pauses.*) But you don't care for all this, I suppose? It does well enough for an old uncle to perplex himself with these niceties: it is you yourself the dear man happens to love, and none of those naughty women I have been talking of, so all is very right. (*Pauses, and she seems thoughtful.*)

Ag. (*assuming a grave and more dignified air.*) No, Sir, you injure me: prove that his love for me is stronger than his love of virtue, and I will—

With. What will you do, Agnes?

Ag. I will give him up forever.

With. Ay, there spoke a brave girl! you deserve the best husband in Christendom for this.

Ag. Nay, if Harwood endures not the test, I will indeed renounce him, but no other man shall ever fill his place.

With. Well, well, we shall see, we shall see. (*Walks up and down. She is thoughtful.*) You are very thoughtful, Agnes! I fear I have distressed you.

Ag. You have distressed me, yet I thank you for it. I have been too presumptuous, I have ventured farther than I ought. Since it

is so, I will not shrink from the trial. (*Pauses.*) Don't you think he will go through it honourably?

With. (*shaking his head.*) Indeed I know not—I hope he will.

Ag. You hope? I thank you for that word, my dear Sir! I hope he will too. (*She remains thoughtful: he takes a turn or two across the stage.*)

With. (*clapping her shoulder affectionately.*) What are you thinking of, niece?

Ag. How to set about this business.

With. And how will you do it?

Ag. I will write a letter to Lady Fade, asking pardon for having told some malicious falsehoods of her, to a relation on whom she is dependent; begging she will make up the matter, and forgive me, promising at the same time, most humbly, if she will not expose me for this time, never to offend so any more. Next time he comes, I will make him direct the letter himself, that when it falls into his hands again, he may have no doubt of its authenticity. Will this do?

With. Yes, very well. If he loves you after this, his love is not worth the having.

Ag. Ah, uncle! You are very hard-hearted! But you are very right: I know you are very right. Pray does not Royston lodge in the same house with Harwood?

With. He does.

Ag. I wish, by his means, we could conceal ourselves somewhere in his apartments, where we might see Harwood have the letter put into his hands, and observe his behaviour. I don't know any body else who can do this for us: do you think you could put him into good humour again?

With. I rather think I can, for he hath still a favour to ask of me.

Ag. We must give him a part to act; do you think he can do it?

With. He is a very blundering fellow, but he will be so flattered with being let into the secret, that I know he will do his best.

Enter MARIANE.

Mar. What have you been about so long together?

With. Hatching a new plot; and we set about it directly too.

Mar. I am very sure the plot is of your own hatching, then; for I never saw Agnes with any thing of this kind in her head, wear such a grave spiritless face upon it before.

With. You are mistaken, Ma'am, it is of her own contrivance; but you shall know nothing about it. And I give you warning that this shall be the last of them: if you have got any more poor devils on your hands to torment, do it quickly; for I will have an end put to all this foolery.

Mar. Very well, uncle; I have just been following your advice. I have discarded Sir Ulock O'Grady, and I have only now poor Opal to reward for his services. I have got a promise of marriage from him, in which he forfeits ten thousand pounds if he draws back. I shall torment him with this a little. It was an extraordinary thing to be sure for an heiress to demand: but I told him it was the fashion; and now that he has bound himself so securely, he is quite at heart's ease, and thinks every thing snug and well settled.

Enter ROYSTON, a Servant announcing him.

With. Your servant, Mr. Royston, I am very glad to see you. Don't start at seeing the ladies with me; I know my niece, Mariane, and you have had a little misunderstanding, but when I have explained the matter to you, you will be friends with her again, and laugh at it yourself.

Roy. (*coldly.*) I have the honour to wish the ladies good morning.

With. Nay, cousin, you don't understand how it is: these girls have been playing tricks upon every man they have met with since they came here; and when that wild creature (*pointing to* Mariane,) was only laughing at the cheat she had passed upon them all, which I shall explain to you presently, you thought she was laughing at you. Shake hands, and be friends with her, cousin; nobody minds what a foolish girl does.

Roy. (*his face brightening up.*) O! for that matter, I mind these things as little as any body, cousin Withrington. I have too many affairs of importance on my hands, to attend to such little matters as these. I am glad the young lady had a hearty laugh with all my soul; and I shall be happy to see her as merry again whenever she has a mind to it. I mind it! no, no, no!

Mar. I thank you, Sir; and I hope we shall be merry again, when you shall have your own share of the joke.

Roy. Yes, yes, we shall be very merry. By the bye, Withrington, I came here to tell you, that I have got my business with the duke put into so good a train, that it can hardly misgive.

With. I am happy to hear it.

Roy. You must know I have set very artfully about it, cousin; but I dare say you would guess as much, he, he, he! You knew me of old, eh! I have got Mr. Cullyfool to ask it for me on his own account; I have bribed an old house-keeper, who is to interest a great lady in my favour; I have called eleven times on his grace's half-cousin, till she has fairly promised to write to the dutchess upon the business; I have written to the steward, and promised his son all my interest at next election, if he has any mind to stand for our borough, you know; and I have applied by a friend—no, no, he has applied through the medium of another friend; or rather, I believe, by that friend's wife, or aunt, or some way or other, I don't exactly remember, but it is a very good channel, I know.

With. O! I make no doubt of it.

Roy. Nay, my landlady has engaged her

apothecary's wife to speak to his grace's physician about it; and a medical man, you know, sometimes asks a favour with great advantage, when a patient believes that his life is in his hands. The duke has got a most furious fit of the gout, and it has been in his stomach too, ha, ha, ha, ha!—If we can't succeed without it, I have a friend who will offer a round sum for me, at last; but I hope this will not be necessary. Pray, do you know of any other good channel to solicit by?

With. 'Faith, Royston! you have found out too many roads to one place already; I fear you'll lose your way amongst them all.

Roy. Nay, nay, cousin, I won't be put off so. I have been told this morning you are acquainted with Sucksop, the duke's greatest friend and adviser. Come, come! you must use your interest for me.

With. Well, then, come in the other room, and we shall speak about it. I have a favour to ask of you too.

Roy. My dear Sir, any favour in my power you may absolutely command at all times. I'll follow you, cousin. (*Goes to the door with* Withrington *with great alacrity, but recollecting that he has forgotten to pay his compliments to the ladies, hurries back again, and, after making several very profound bows to them, follows* Withrington *into another room.*)

Mar. (*imitating him.*) Ha, ha, ha, ha!

Ag. Softly, Mariane; let us leave this room, if you must laugh, for he will overhear you. [Exeunt.

SCENE II.—ROYSTON'S LODGINGS.

Enter ROYSTON, conducting in AGNES, MARIANE, and WITHRINGTON.

Roy. Now, pray compose yourselves, young ladies, and sit down a little. I'll manage every thing: don't give yourself any trouble; I'll set the whole plot a-going.

With. We depend entirely upon you, cousin Royston.

Roy. I know you do; many a one depends upon me, cousin Withrington. I'll shew you how I'll manage it. Jonathan, come here, Jonathan! (*Enter* Jonathan.) Bring me that screen from the other room. (*Exit* Jonathan.) We'll place it here, if you please, cousin, and then you and the ladies can stand as snugly behind it, as kings and queens in a puppet-show, till your time comes to appear. (*Enter* Jonathan *with screen.*) Come hither with it, Jonathan: place it here. (*Pointing.*) No, no, jolter-head, nearer the wall with it. (*Going behind it, and coming out again.*) It will do better a little more this side, for then it will be farther from the window.

Ag. O! it will do very well, Sir; you take too much trouble.

Roy. Trouble, my dear Ma'am! If it were a hundred times more trouble, I should be happy to serve you. I don't mind trouble, if I can get the thing done cleverly and completely. That's my way of doing things. No, it don't stand to please me yet; it is too near the door now, and the ladies may catch cold, perhaps.

Ag. (*very uneasy.*) Indeed it stands very well! Harwood will be here before we are ready.

Roy. (*to* Jon.) Blockhead that thou art! canst thou not set it up even? Now, that will do. (*Getting behind it.*) This will do. (*Coming out again.*) Yes, this will do to a nicety.

Mar. (*aside.*) Heaven be praised, this grand matter is settled at last!

Roy. Now he'll think it odd, perhaps, that I have a screen in my room; but I have a trick for that, ladies; I'll tell him I mean to purchase lands in Canada, and have been looking over the map of America. (Agnes *looks to* Withrington *very uneasy.*)

With. Don't do that, Royston, for then he will examine the screen.

Roy. Or, I may say, there is a chink in the wall, and I placed it to keep out the air.

Ag. No, no, that won't do. For Heaven's sake, Sir!

Roy. Then I shall just say, I like to have a screen in my room, for I am used to it at home.

Mar. Bless me, Mr. Royston! can't you just leave it alone, and he'll take no notice of it.

Roy. O! if he takes no notice of it, that is a different thing, Miss Withrington: but don't be uneasy, I'll manage it all; I'll conduct the whole business.

Ag. (*aside to* Withrington.) O! my good Sir! this fool will ruin every thing.

With. Be quiet, Agnes, we are in for it now.

Roy. Let me remember my lesson too. Here is the letter for him, with the seal as naturally broken, as if the lady had done it herself. Harwood will wonder, now, how I came to know about all this. 'Faith! I believe, he thinks me a strange, diving, penetrating kind of a genius, already, and he is not far wrong, perhaps. You know me, cousin Withrington: ha, ha, ha, ha! You know me.

Ag. O! I wish it were over, and we were out of this house again!

Roy. Don't be uneasy, Ma'am, I'll manage every thing.—Jonathan! Jonathan, (*Enter*) don't you go and tell Mr. Harwood that I have got company here.

Jon. No, no, your honour, I knows better than that; for the ladies are to be behind the screen, Sir, and he must know nothing of the matter, to be sure. I'ficken! it will be rare sport!

Ag. (*starting.*) I hear a knock at the door.

Roy. It is him, I dare say; run, Jonathan. [Exit *Jonathan.*

Ag. Come, come, let us hide ourselves. (*All get behind the screen but* Royston.)

Roy. Ay, ay, it will do very well. (*Looking at the screen.*)

Ag. (*behind.*) Mariane, don't breathe so loud.

Mar. (*behind.*) I don't breathe loud.

Ag. (*behind.*) Do, uncle, draw in the edge of your coat.

With. (*behind.*) Poo, silly girl! they can't see a bit of it.

Enter Colonel HARDY and HARWOOD.

Roy. Ha! your servant, my dear Colonel. How goes it, Harwood? I bade my man tell you I was alone, and very much disposed for your good company; but I am doubly fortunate. (*Bowing to the* Colonel.)

Col. Indeed, Royston, I have been pretty much with him these two days past, and I don't believe he gives me great thanks for my company. I am like an old horse running after a colt; the young devil never fails to turn now and then, and give him a kick for his pains.

Har. Nay, my good friend, I must be an ass's colt then, I am sure, I mean it not; but I am not happy, and fear I have been peevish with you.

Roy. (*attempting to look archly.*) Peevish, and all that! perhaps the young man is in love, Colonel?

Col. No more, if you please, Royston: we are to speak of this no more.

Enter JONATHAN.

Jon. Did your honour call?

Roy. No, sirrah. (Jonathan *goes, as if he were looking for something, and takes a sly peep behind the screen, to see if they are all there.*) What are you peeping there for? get along, you hound! Does he want to make people believe I keep rary-shows behind the wainscot? (EXIT Jonathan.) But as I was a saying, Colonel, perhaps the young man is in love. He, he, he!

Col. No, no, let us have no more of it.

Roy. But 'faith, I know that he is so! and I know the lady too. She is a cousin of my own, and I am as well acquainted with her as I am with my own dog.—But you don't ask me what kind of a girl she is. (*To the* Colonel.)

Col. Give over now, Royston; she is a very good girl, I dare say.

Roy. Well, you may think so, but—(*Making significant faces.*) But—I should not say all I know of my own cousin, to be sure, but—

Har. What are all those cursed grimaces for? Her faults are plain and open as her perfections: these she disdains to conceal, and the others it is impossible.

Roy. Softly, Harwood; don't be in a passion, unless you would imitate your mistress; for she has not the gentlest temper in the world.

Har. Well, well, I love her the better for it. I can't bear your insipid passionless women; I would as soon live upon sweet curd all my life, as attach myself to one of them.

Roy. She is very extravagant.

Har. Heaven bless the good folks! would they have a man to give up the woman of his heart, because she likes a bit of lace upon her petticoat?

Roy. Well, but she is—

Col. Devil take you, Royston! can't you hold your tongue about her? you see he can't bear it.

Roy. (*making signs to the* Colonel.) Let me alone; I know when to speak, and when to hold my tongue, as well as another. Indeed, Harwood, I am your friend; and though the lady is my relation, I must say, I wish you had made a better choice. I have discovered something in regard to her this morning, which shews her to be a very improper one. I cannot say, however, that I have discovered any thing which surprised me; I know her too well.

Har. (*vehemently.*) You are imposed upon by some damn'd falsehood.

Roy. But I have proof of what I say; the lady who is injured by her gave me this letter to shew to Mr. Withrington. (*Taking out the letter.*)

Har. It is some fiend who wants to undermine her, and has forged that scrawl to serve her spiteful purpose.

Roy. I should be glad it were so, my dear friend; but Lady Fade is a woman, whose veracity has never been suspected.

Har. Is it from Lady Fade? Give it me! (*Snatching the letter.*)

Roy. It is Agnes's hand, is it not?

Har. It is, at least, a good imitation of it.

Roy. Read the contents, pray!

Har. "Madam, what I have said to the prejudice of your ladyship's character to your relation, Mr. Worthy, I am heartily sorry for; and I am ready to beg pardon on my knees, if you desire it: to acknowledge before Mr. Worthy himself, that it is a falsehood, or make any other reparation, in a private way, that you may desire. Let me, then, conjure your ladyship not to expose me, and I shall ever remain your most penitent and grateful A. Withrington."

Roy. The lady would not be so easily pacified, though; for she blackened her character, in order to make her best friend upon earth quarrel with her: so she gave me the letter to shew to her uncle. Is it forged, think you?

Har. It is possible—I will venture to say —Nay, I am sure it is!

Roy. If it is, there is one circumstance which may help to discover the author; it is directed by a different hand on the back. Look at it.

Har. (*In great perturbation.*) Is it? (*Turns hastily the folds of the letter, but his hand trembles so much he can't find the back.*)

Col. My dear Harwood! this is the back of the letter, and methinks the writing is somewhat like your own. (Harwood *looks at it; then staggering back, throws himself into a chair, which happens to be behind him, and covers his upper face with his hand.*)

Col. My dear Harwood!

Roy. See how his lips quiver, and his bosom heaves! Let us unbutton him; I fear he is going into a fit. (Agnes *comes from behind the screen in a fright, and* Withrington *pulls her in again.*)

Col. (*with great tenderness.*) My dear Harwood!

Har. (*with a broken voice.*) I'll go to my own chamber. (*Gets up hastily from his chair, and then falls back again in a faint.*)

Col. He has fainted.

Roy. Help, help, here! (*Running about.*) Who has got hartshorn, or lavender, or water? help here! (*They all come from behind the screen.* Agnes *runs to* Harwood, *and sprinkles him over with lavender, rubbing his temples, &c. whilst* Colonel Hardy *stares at them all in amazement.*)

Ag. Alas! we have carried this too far! Harwood! my dear Harwood!

Col. (*to* Roy.) What is all this?

Roy. I thought we should amaze you. knew I should manage it.

Col. You have managed finely indeed, to put Harwood into such a state with your mummery.

Ag. Will he not come to himself again? Get some water, Mariane—See how pale he is! (*He recovers.*) O! he recovers! Harwood! do you know me, Harwood?

Har. (*looking upon* Agnes, *and shrinking back from her.*) Ha! what has brought you here? leave me! leave me! I am wretched enough already.

Ag. I come to bring you relief, my dear Harwood.

Har. No, madam, it is misery you bring. We must part forever.

Ag. O! uncle! do you hear that? He says We must part forever.

With. (*taking hold of* Agnes.) Don't be in such a hurry about it.

Har. (*rising up.*) How came you here? (*to* Withrington,) and these ladies?

Roy. O! it was all my contrivance.

With. Pray now, Royston, be quiet a little. —Mr. Harwood, I will speak to you seriously. I see you are attached to my niece, and I confess she has many faults; but you are a man of sense, and with you she will make a more respectable figure in the world than with any other; I am anxious for her welfare, and if you will marry her, I will give her such a fortune as will make it no longer an imprudent step to follow your inclinations.

Har. No, Sir, you shall keep your fortune and your too bewitching niece together. For her sake I would have renounced all ambition; I would have shared with her poverty and neglect; I would have borne with all her faults and weaknesses of nature; I would have toiled, I would have bled for her; but I can never yoke myself with unworthiness.

Ag. (*wiping her eyes, and giving two skips upon the floor.*) O! admirable! admirable! speak to him uncle! tell him all, my dear uncle! for I can't say a word.

Col. (*aside to* Royston.) Isn't she a little wrong in the head, Royston?

With. Give me your hand, Harwood: you are a noble fellow, and you shall marry this little girl of mine after all. This story of the letter and Lady Fade, was only a concerted one amongst us, to prove what mettle you are made of. Agnes, to try your love, affected to be shrewish and extravagant; and afterwards, at my suggestion, to try your principles, contrived this little plot, which has just now been unravelled: but I do assure you, on the word of an honest man, there is not a better girl in the kingdom. I must own, however, she is a fanciful little toad. (Harwood *runs to* Agnes, *catches her in his arms, and runs two or three times round with her, then takes her hand and kisses it, and then puts his knee to the ground.*)

Har. My charming, my delightful Agnes! Oh! what a fool have I been! how could I suppose it?

Ag. We took some pains with you, and it would have been hard if we could not have deceived you amongst us all.

Har. And so thou art a good girl, a very good girl. I know thou art. I'll be hang'd if thou hast one fault in the world.

With. No, no, Harwood, not quite so perfect. I can prove her still to be an arrant cheat: for she pretended to be careless of you when she thought of you all the day long; and she pretended to be poor with an hundred thousand pounds, independent of any one, in her possession. She is Miss Withrington the heiress; and this lady, (*pointing to* Mariane,) has only been her representative, for a time, for reasons which I shall explain to you by-and-by. (Harwood *lets go* Agnes's *hand, and steps back some paces with a certain gravity and distance in his air.*)

With. What is the matter now, Harwood? does this cast a damp upon you?

Roy. It is a weighty distress truly. Ha, ha, ha, ha!

Col. By heaven this is good.

Ag. (*going up to* Harwood, *and holding out her hand.*) Do not look so distantly upon me, Harwood: you was willing to marry me as a poor woman; if there is any thing in my fortune which offends you, I scatter it to the winds.

Har. My admirable girl! it is astonishment, it is something I cannot express, which overcomes, I had almost said distresses me, at present. (*Presenting her to the* Colonel.) Colonel Hardy, this is the woman I have raved about! this is the woman I have boasted of! this is my Agnes! and this, Miss Withrington, is Colonel Hardy, my own, and my father's friend.

Ag. (*holding out her hand to the* Colonel.) He shall be mine too. Every friend of yours shall be my friend, Harwood; but the friend to your father my most respected one.

Har. Do you hear that, Colonel?

Col. I hear it; my heart hears it, and blesses you both.

Har. (*to* With.) My dear Sir, what shall I say to you for all this goodness?

Ag. Tell him he is the dearest good uncle on earth, and we will love him all our lives for it. Yes, indeed, we will, uncle, (*taking his hand.*) very, very dearly!

Roy. Now, good folks, have not I managed it cleverly?

Mar. Pray let me come from the back ground a little: and since I must quit all the splendour of heiress-ship, I desire, at least, that I may have some respect paid me for having filled the situation so well, as the old Mayor receives the thanks of the corporation, when the new mayor—Bless me! here comes Opal! I have not quite done with it yet.

With. Your servant, Mr. Opal.

Mar. (*to* Op.) Are you not surprised to find us all here?

Op. Harwood I know is a very lucky fellow, but I knew you were here. It is impossible, you see, to escape me. But (*half aside to* Mariane.) I wanted to tell you Colonel Beaumont is come to Bath. Now I should like to be introduced to him on his arrival. He will be very much the fashion I dare say, and I should like to have a friendship for him. You understand me? You can procure this for me, I know.

With. Come, Mr. Opal, you must join in our good humour here, for we have just been making up a match. My niece, Agnes, with a large fortune, bestows herself on a worthy man, who would have married her without one; and Mariane, who for certain reasons has assumed her character of heiress since we came to Bath, leaves all her borrowed state, in hopes that the man who would have married her with a fortune, will not now forsake her.

Op. (*stammering.*) Wh—Wh—What is all this?

Roy. (*half aside to* Opal.) You seem disturbed, Mr. Opal; you have not been paying your addresses to her, I hope.

Op. (*aside to* Royston.) No, not paying my addresses; that is to say, not absolutely. I have paid her some attention to be sure.

Roy. (*nodding significantly.*) It is well for you it is no worse.

Mar. (*turning to* Opal, *who looks very much frightened.*) What is it you say! Don't you think I overheard it? Not paid your addresses to me! O! you false man! can you deny the declarations you have made? the oaths you have sworn? O! you false man!

Op. Upon honour, Madam, we men of the world don't expect to be called to an account for every foolish thing we say.

Mar. What you have written then shall witness against you. Will you deny this promise of marriage in your own hand-writing? (*Taking out a paper.*)

Roy. (*aside to* Op.) What, a promise of marriage, Mr. Opal? The devil himself could not have put it into your head to do a worse thing than this.

Op. (*very frightened, but making a great exertion.*) Don't think, Ma'am, to bully me into the match. I can prove that promise to be given to you under the false character of an heiress, therefore your deceit loosens the obligation.

With. Take care what you say, Sir; (*to* Op.) I will not see my niece wronged. The law shall do her justice, whatever expence it may cost me.

Mar. Being an heiress, or not, has nothing to do in the matter, Mr. Opal; for you expressly say in this promise, that my beauty and perfections alone have induced you to engage yourself; and I will take all the men in court to witness, whether I am not as handsome to-day as I was yesterday.

Op. I protest there is not such a word in the paper.

Mar. (*holding out the paper.*) O base man! will you deny your own writing? (Op. *snatches the paper from her, tears it to pieces.*)

Mar. (*gathering up the scattered pieces.*) O! I can put them together again. (Op. *snatching up one of the pieces, crams it into his mouth and chews it.*)

Roy. Chew fast, Opal! she will snatch it out of your mouth else. There is another bit for you. (*Offering him another piece.*)

Mar. (*Bursting into a loud laugh, in which all the company join.*) Is it very nice, Mr. Opal? You munch it up as expeditiously as a bit of plum-cake.

Op. What the deuce does all this mean!

With. This naughty girl, Mr. Opal, has only been amusing herself with your promise which she never meant to make any other use of; she is already engaged to a very worthy young man, who will receive with her a fortune by no means contemptible.

Op. Well, well, much good may it do him: what do I care about—(*mumbling to himself.*)

Roy. Ha, ha, ha! how some people do get themselves into scrapes! They have no more notion of managing their affairs than so many sheep. Ha, ha, ha!

Enter HUMPHRY.

Humph. (*to* Roy.) I would speak a word with your honour. (*Whispers to* Royston.)

Roy. (*in a rage.*) What! given away the place! It is some wicked machination! It is some damn'd trick!

With. Be moderate, Royston: what has good Mr. Humphry been telling you?

Roy O! the devil of a bite! his Grace has given away the place to a poor simpleton, who had never a soul to speak for him!

With. Who told you this, Mr. Humphry?

Humph. Truly, Sir, I called upon his Grace's gentleman, just to make up a kind of acquaintance with him, as his honour desired me, and he told me it was given away this morning.

Roy. What cursed luck!

Humph. "Why," says I, "I thought my master was to have had it, Mr. Smoothly."

"And so he would," says he, "but one person came to the Duke after another, teasing him about Mr. Royston, till he grew quite impatient; for there was but one of all those friends," says he, winking with his eye so, "who did speak at last to the purpose; but then, upon Mr. Sucksop's taking up your master's interest, he shrunk back from his word, which offended his Grace very much."

Roy. Blundering blockhead!

Humph. And so he gave away the place directly to poor Mr. Drudgewell, who had no recommendation at all, but fifteen years hard service in the office.

Roy. Well, now! well, now! you see how the world goes; simpletons and idiots carry every thing before them.

With. Nay, Royston, blame yourself too. Did not I tell you, you had found out too many roads to one place, and would lose your way amongst them?

Roy. No, no, it is all that cursed perverse fate of mine! By the Lord, half the trouble I have taken for this paltry office, would have procured some people an archbishoprick! There is Harwood, now, fortune presses herself upon him, and makes him, at one stroke, an idle gentleman for life.

Har. No, Sir, an idle gentleman I will never be: my Agnes shall never be the wife of any thing so contemptible.

Ag. I thank you, Harwood; I do, indeed, look for honourable distinction in being your wife. You shall still exert your powers in the profession you have chosen: you shall be the weak one's stay, the poor man's advocate; you shall gain fair fame in recompense, and that will be our nobility.

With. Well said, my children! you have more sense than I thought you had amongst all these whimsies. Now, let us take our leave of plots and story-telling, if you please, and all go to my house to supper. Royston shall drown his disappointment in a can of warm negus, and Mr. Opal shall have something more palatable than his last spare morsel.

[Exeunt.

DE MONFORT: A TRAGEDY.

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

MEN.

De Monfort.
Rezenvelt.
Count Freberg, *Friend to* De Monfort *and* Rezenvelt.
Manuel, *Servant to* De Monfort.
Jerome, De Monfort's *old Landlord.*
Conrad, *an artful Knave.*
Bernard, *a Monk.*

Monks, Gentlemen, Officers, Page, *&c. &c.*

WOMEN.

Jane De Monfort, *Sister to* De Monfort.
Countess Freberg, *Wife to* Freberg.
Theresa, *Servant to the* Countess.

Abbess, Nuns, *and a* Lay Sister, Ladies, *&c.*

*** *Scene, a Town in* Germany.

ACT I.

Scene I.—Jerome's house. A large old-fashioned chamber.

Jer. (speaking without.) This way, good masters.

Enter Jerome, bearing a light, and followed by Manuel, and servants carrying luggage.

Rest your burthens here.
This spacious room will please the Marquis best.
He takes me unawares; but ill prepar'd:
If he had sent, e'en tho' a hasty notice,
I had been glad.

Man. Be not disturb'd, good Jerome;
Thy house is in most admirable order;
And they who travel o' cold winter nights
Think homeliest quarters good.

Jer. He is not far behind?

Man. A little way.
(*To the Servants.*) Go you and wait below till he arrives.

Jer. (*shaking* Manuel *by the hand.*) Indeed, my friend, I'm glad to see you here,
Yet marvel wherefore.

Man. I marvel wherefore too, my honest Jerome:
But here we are; pri'thee be kind to us.

Jer. Most heartily I will. I love your master:
He is a quiet and a lib'ral man:
A better inmate never crossed my door.

Man. Ah! but he is not now the man he was.
Lib'ral he'll be. God grant he may be quiet.

Jer. What has befallen him?

Man. I cannot tell thee;
But faith, there is no living with him now.

Jer. And yet methinks, if I remember well,
You were about to quit his service, Manuel,
When last he left this house. You grumbled then.

Man. I've been upon the eve of leaving him
These ten long years; for many times is he
So difficult, capricious, and distrustful,
He galls my nature—yet, I know not how,
A secret kindness binds me to him still.

Jer. Some, who offend from a suspicious nature,
Will afterward such fair confession make
As turns e'en the offence into a favour.

Man. Yes, some indeed do so: so will not he:
He'd rather die than such confession make.

Jer. Ay, thou art right; for now I call to mind
That once he wrong'd me with unjust suspicion,
When first he came to lodge beneath my roof;
And when it so fell out that I was prov'd
Most guiltless of the fault, I truly thought
He would have made profession of regret.
But silent, haughty, and ungraciously
He bore himself as one offended still.
Yet shortly after, when unwittingly
I did him some slight service, o'the sudden
He overpower'd me with his grateful thanks;
And would not be restrain'd from pressing on me
A noble recompense. I understood
His o'erstrain'd gratitude and bounty well,
And took it as he meant.

Man. 'Tis often thus.
I would have left him many years ago,
But that with all his faults there sometimes come
Such bursts of natural goodness from his heart,
As might engage a harder churl than me
To serve him still.—And then his sister too;
A noble dame, who should have been a queen:
The meanest of her hinds, at her command,
Had fought like lions for her, and the poor,
E'en o'er their bread of poverty, had bless'd her—
She would have griev'd if I had left my Lord.

Jer. Comes she along with him?

Man. No, he departed all unknown to her,

Meaning to keep conceal'd his secret route;
But well I knew it would afflict her much,
And therefore left a little nameless billet,
Which after our departure, as I guess,
Would fall into her hands, and tell her all.
What could I do? O 'tis a noble lady!

Jer. All this is strange—something disturbs his mind—
Belike he is in love.

Man. No, Jerome, no.
Once on a time I serv'd a noble master,
Whose youth was blasted with untoward love,
And he with hope and fear and jealousy
Forever toss'd, led an unquiet life:
Yet, when unruffled by the passing fit,
His pale wan face such gentle sadness wore
As mov'd a kindly heart to pity him.
But Monfort, even in his calmest hour,
Still bears that gloomy sternness in his eye
Which powerfully repels all sympathy.
O no! good Jerome, no; it is not love.

Jer. Hear I not horses trampling at the gate? (*Listening.*)
He is arriv'd—stay thou—I had forgot—
A plague upon't! my head is so confus'd—
I will return i' the instant to receive him.
(Exit *hastily.*)

(*A great bustle without.* Exit Manuel *with lights, and returns again, lighting in* De Monfort, *as if just alighted from his journey.*)

Man. Your ancient host, my Lord, receives you gladly,
And your apartment will be soon prepar'd.

De Mon. 'Tis well.

Man. Where shall I place the chest you gave in charge?
So please you, say my Lord.

De Mon. (*throwing himself into a chair.*) Where'er thou wilt.

Man. I would not move that luggage till you came. (*Pointing to certain things.*)

De Mon. Move what thou wilt, and trouble me no more.

(Manuel, *with the assistance of other servants, sets about putting the things in order, and* De Monfort *remains sitting in a thoughtful posture.*)

Enter Jerome, bearing wine, &c. on a salver. As he approaches De Monfort, Manuel pulls him by the sleeve.

Man. (*aside to* Jerome.) No, do not now; he will not be disturb'd.

Jer. What, not to bid him welcome to my house,
And offer some refreshment?

Man. No, good Jerome.
Softly a little while: I pri'thee do.

(Jerome *walks softly on tiptoes, till he gets behind* De Monfort, *then peeping on one side to see his face.*)

Jer. (*aside to* Manuel.) Ah, Manuel, what an alter'd man is here!
His eyes are hollow, and his cheeks are pale—
He left this house a comely gentleman.

De Mon. Who whispers there?

Man. 'Tis your old landlord, Sir.

Jer. I joy to see you here—I crave your pardon—I fear I do intrude.—

De Mon. No, my kind host, I am oblig'd to thee.

Jer. How fares it with your honour?

De Mon. Well enough.

Jer. Here is a little of the fav'rite wine
That you were wont to praise. Pray honour me. (*Fills a glass.*)

De Mon. (*after drinking.*) I thank you, Jerome, 'tis delicious.

Jer. Ay, my dear wife did ever make it so.

De Mon. And how does she?

Jer. Alas, my Lord! she's dead.

De Mon. Well, then she is at rest.

Jer. How well, my Lord?

De Mon. Is she not with the dead, the quiet dead,
Where all is peace? Not e'en the impious wretch,
Who tears the coffin from its earthly vault,
And strews the mould'ring ashes to the wind,
Can break their rest.

Jer. Woe's me! I thought you would have grieved for her.
She was a kindly soul! Before she died,
When pining sickness bent her cheerless head,
She set my house in order—
And but the morning ere she breath'd her last,
Bade me preserve some flaskets of this wine,
That should the Lord de Monfort come again
His cup might sparkle still. (De Monfort *walks across the stage, and wipes his eyes.*)
Indeed I fear I have distress'd you, Sir;
I surely thought you would be grieved for her.

De Mon. (*taking* Jerome's *hand.*) I am, my friend. How long has she been dead?

Jer. Two sad long years.

De Mon. Would she were living still!
I was too troublesome, too heedless of her.

Jer. O no! she lov'd to serve you.
(*Loud knocking without.*)

De Mon. What fool comes here, at such untimely hours,
To make this cursed noise? (*To* Manuel.) Go to the gate. [Exit Manuel.
All sober citizens are gone to bed;
It is some drunkards on their nightly rounds,
Who mean it but in sport.

Jer. I hear unusual voices—here they come.

Re-enter Manuel, shewing in Count Freberg and his Lady, with a mask in her hand.

Freb. (*running to embrace* De Mon.) My dearest Monfort! most unlook'd for pleasure!
Do I indeed embrace thee here again?
I saw thy servant standing by the gate,
His face recall'd, and learnt the joyful tidings.
Welcome, thrice welcome here!

De Mon. I thank thee, Freberg, for this friendly visit,
And this fair Lady too. (*Bowing to the lady.*)

Lady. I fear, my Lord,

We do intrude at an untimely hour:
But now, returning from a midnight mask,
My husband did insist that we should enter.

Freb. No, say not so; no hour untimely call,
Which doth together bring long absent friends.
Dear Monfort, why hast thou so slyly play'd,
To come upon us thus so suddenly?

De Mon. O! many varied thoughts do cross our brain,
Which touch the will, but leave the memory trackless;
And yet a strange compounded motive make,
Wherefore a man should bend his evening walk
To th' east or west, the forest or the field.
Is it not often so?

Freb. I ask no more, happy to see you here
From any motive. There is one behind,
Whose presence would have been a double bliss:
Ah! how is she? The noble Jane De Monfort.

De Mon. (*confused.*) She is—I have—I left my sister well.

Lady. (*to* Freberg.) My Freberg, you are heedless of respect:
You surely mean to say the Lady Jane.

Freb. Respect! No, Madam; Princess, Empress, Queen,
Could not denote a creature so exalted
As this plain appellation doth,
The noble Jane De Monfort.

Lady. (*turning from him displeased to* Mon.)
You are fatigued, my Lord; you want repose;
Say, should we not retire?

Freb. Ha! is it so?
My friend, your face is pale, have you been ill?

De Mon. No, Freberg, no; I think I have been well.

Freb. (*shaking his head.*) I fear thou hast not, Monfort—Let it pass.
We'll re-establish thee: we'll banish pain.
I will collect some rare, some cheerful friends,
And we shall spend together glorious hours,
That gods might envy. Little time so spent
Doth far outvalue all our life beside.
This is indeed our life, our waking life,
The rest dull breathing sleep.

De Mon. Thus, it is true, from the sad years of life
We sometimes do short hours, yea minutes strike,
Keen, blissful, bright, never to be forgotten;
Which, thro' the dreary gloom of time o'er-past,
Shine like fair sunny spots on a wild waste.
But few they are, as few the heaven-fir'd souls
Whose magick power creates them. Bless'd art thou,
If, in the ample circle of thy friends,
Thou canst but boast a few.

Freb. Judge for thyself: in truth I do not boast.
There is amongst my friends, my later friends,
A most accomplish'd stranger: new to Amberg;
But just arriv'd, and will ere long depart.
I met him in Franconia two years since.
He is so full of pleasant anecdote,
So rich, so gay, so poignant is his wit,
Time vanishes before him as he speaks,
And ruddy morning thro' the lattice peeps
Ere night seems well begun.

De Mon. How is he call'd?

Freb. I will surprise thee with a welcome face:
I will not tell thee now.

Lady. (*to* Mon.) I have, my Lord, a small request to make,
And must not be denied. I too may boast
Of some good friends, and beauteous country-women:
To-morrow night I open wide my doors
To all the fair and gay: beneath my roof
Musick, and dance, and revelry shall reign;
I pray you come and grace it with your presence.

De Mon. You honour me too much to be denied.

Lady. I thank you, Sir; and in return for this,
We shall withdraw, and leave you to repose.

Freb. Must it be so? Good night—sweet sleep to thee! (*To* De Monfort.)

De Mon. (*to* Freb.) Good night. (*To Lady.*) Good night, fair Lady.

Lady. Farewell!

[Exeunt Freberg *and* Lady.

De Mon. (*to* Jer.) I thought Count Freberg had been now in France.

Jer. He meant to go, as I have been inform'd.

De Mon. Well, well, prepare my bed; I will to rest. [Exit Jerome.

De Mon. (*aside.*) I know not how it is, my heart stands back,
And meets not this man's love.—Friends! rarest friends!
Rather than share his undiscerning praise
With every table wit, and book-form'd sage,
And paltry poet puling to the moon,
I'd court from him proscription, yea abuse,
And think it proud distinction. [Exit.

Scene II.—A small apartment in Jerome's house: a table and breakfast set out.

Enter De Monfort, followed by Manuel, and sets himself down by the table, with a cheerful face.

De Mon. Manuel, this morning's sun shines pleasantly:
These old apartments too are light and cheerful.
Our landlord's kindness has reviv'd me much;
He serves as though he lov'd me. This pure air
Braces the listless nerves, and warms the blood;
I feel in freedom here.

(*Filling a cup of coffee, and drinking.*)

Man. Ah! sure, my Lord,
No air is purer than the air at home.

De Mon. Here can I wander with assured steps,

Nor dread, at every winding of the path,
Lest an abhorred serpent cross my way,
To move—(*stopping short.*)

Man. What says your honour?
There are no serpents in our pleasant fields.

De Mon. Think'st thou there are no serpents in the world
But those who slide along the grassy sod,
And sting the luckless foot that presses them?
There are who in the path of social life
Do bask their spotted skins in Fortune's sun,
And sting the soul—Ay, till its healthful frame
Is chang'd to secret, fest'ring, sore disease,
So deadly is the wound.

Man. Heaven guard your honour from such horrid skathe!
They are but rare, I hope?

De Mon. (*shaking his head.*) We mark the hollow eye, the wasted frame,
The gait disturb'd of wealthy honour'd men,
But do not know the cause.

Man. 'Tis very true. God keep you well, my Lord!

De Mon. I thank thee, Manuel, I am very well.
I shall be gay too, by the setting sun.
I go to revel it with sprightly dames,
And drive the night away.

(*Filling another cup, and drinking.*)

Man. I should be glad to see your honour gay.

De Mon. And thou too shalt be gay. There, honest Manuel,
Put these broad pieces in thy leathern purse,
And take at night a cheerful jovial glass.
Here is one too, for Bremer: he loves wine;
And one for Jaques: be joyful all together.

Enter SERVANT.

Ser. My Lord, I met e'en now, a short way off,
Your countryman the Marquis Rezenvelt.

De Mon. (*starting from his seat, and letting the cup fall from his hand.*) Who, say'st thou?

Ser. Marquis Rezenvelt, an' please you.

De Mon. Thou ly'st—it is not so—it is impossible!

Ser. I saw him with these eyes, plain as yourself.

De Mon. Fool! 'tis some passing stranger thou hast seen,
And with a hideous likeness been deceiv'd.

Ser. No other stranger could deceive my sight.

De Mon. (*dashing his clenched hand violently upon the table, and overturning every thing.*) Heaven blast thy sight! it lights on nothing good.

Ser. I surely thought no harm to look upon him.

De Mon. What, dost thou still insist? Him must it be?
Does it so please thee well! (Servant *endeavours to speak.*) Hold thy damn'd tongue!
By heaven I'll kill thee! (*Going furiously up to him.*)

Man. (*in a soothing voice.*) Nay harm him not, my Lord; he speaks the truth;
I've met his groom, who told me certainly
His Lord is here. I should have told you so,
But thought, perhaps, it might displease your honour.

De Mon. (*becoming all at once calm, and turning sternly to* Manuel.) And how dar'st thou think it would displease me?
What is't to me who leaves or enters Amberg?
But it displeases me, yea ev'n to frenzy,
That ev'ry idle fool must hither come,
To break my leisure with the paltry tidings
Of all the cursed things he stares upon.

(Servant *attempts to speak*—De Monfort *stamps with his foot.*)

Take thine ill-favoured visage from my sight,
And speak of it no more. EXIT Servant.
And go thou too; I choose to be alone.

[EXIT Manuel.

(De Monfort *goes to the door by which they went out; opens it and looks.*)

But is he gone indeed? Yes, he is gone.

(*Goes to the opposite door, opens it, and looks: then gives loose to all the fury of gesture and walks up and down in great agitation.*)

It is too much: by heaven it is too much!
He haunts me—stings me—like a devil haunts—
He'll make a raving maniack of me—Villain!
The air wherein thou draw'st thy fulsome breath
Is poison to me—Oceans shall divide us!

(*Pauses.*)

But no; thou think'st I fear thee, cursed reptile;
And hast a pleasure in the damned thought.
Though my heart's blood should curdle at thy sight,
I'll stay and face thee still.

(*Knocking at the chamber door.*)

Ha! who knocks there?

Freb. (*without.*) It is thy friend, De Monfort.

De Mon. (*opening the door.*) Enter, then.

Enter FREBERG.

Freb. (*taking his hand kindly.*) How art thou now? How hast thou past the night?
Has kindly sleep refresh'd thee?

De Mon. Yes, I have lost an hour or two in sleep,
And so should be refresh'd.

Freb. And art thou not?
Thy looks speak not of rest. Thou art disturb'd.

De Mon. No, somewhat ruffled from a foolish cause,
Which soon will pass away.

Freb. (*shaking his head.*) Ah no, De Monfort! something in thy face
Tells me another tale. Then wrong me not

If any secret grief distract thy soul,
Here am I all devoted to thy love:
Open thy heart to me. What troubles thee?

De Mon. I have no grief: distress me not, my friend.

Freb. Nay, do not call me so. Wert thou my friend,
Wouldst thou not open all thine inmost soul,
And bid me share its every consciousness?

De Mon. Freberg, thou know'st not man; not nature's man,
But only him who, in smooth studied works
Of polish'd sages, shines deceitfully
In all the splendid foppery of virtue.
That man was never born whose secret soul,
With all its motley treasure of dark thoughts,
Foul fantasies, vain musings, and wild dreams,
Was ever open'd to another's scan.
Away, away! it is delusion all.

Freb. Well, be reserv'd then; perhaps I'm wrong.

De Mon. How goes the hour?

Freb. 'Tis early still; a long day lies before us;
Let us enjoy it. Come along with me;
I'll introduce you to my pleasant friend.

De Mon. Your pleasant friend?

Freb. Yes, him of whom I spake.
(*Taking his hand.*)
There is no good I would not share with thee;
And this man's company, to minds like thine,
Is the best banquet-feast I could bestow.
But I will speak in mystery no more;
It is thy townsman, noble Rezenvelt.
(De Mon. *pulls his hand hastily from* Freberg, *and shrinks back.*) Ha! what is this? Art thou pain-stricken, Monfort?
Nay, on my life, thou rather seem'st offended:
Does it displease thee that I call him friend?

De Mon No, all men are thy friends.

Freb. No, say not all men. But thou art offended.
I see it well. I thought to do thee pleasure.
But if his presence is not welcome here,
He shall not join our company to-day.

De Mon. What dost thou mean to say? What is't to me
Whether I meet with such a thing as Rezenvelt
To-day, to-morrow, every day, or never?

Freb. In truth, I thought you had been well with him.
He prais'd you much.

De Mon. I thank him for his praise—Come, let us move:
This chamber is confin'd and airless grown.
(*Starting.*)
I hear a stranger's voice!

Freb. 'Tis Rezenvelt.
Let him be told that we are gone abroad.

De Mon. (*proudly.*) No! let him enter
Who waits there? Ho! Manuel!

Enter Manuel.

What stranger speaks below?

Man. The Marquis Rezenvelt.
I have not told him that you are within.

De Mon. (*angrily.*) And wherefore didst thou not? Let him ascend.
(*A long pause.* De Monfort *walking up and down with a quick pace.*)

Enter Rezenvelt, and runs freely up to De Monfort.

Rez. (*to* De Mon.) My noble Marquis, welcome!

De Mon. Sir, I thank you.

Rez. (*to* Freb.) My gentle friend, well met. Abroad so early?

Freb. It is indeed an early hour for me.
How sits thy last night's revel on thy spirits?

Rez. O, light as ever. On my way to you,
E'en now, I learnt De Monfort was arriv'd,
And turn'd my steps aside; so here I am.
(*Bowing gaily to* De Monfort)

De Mon. I thank you, Sir; you do me too much honour. (*Proudly.*)

Rez. Nay, say not so; not too much honour surely,
Unless, indeed, 'tis more than pleases you.

De Mon. (*confused.*) Having no previous notice of your coming,
I look'd not for it.

Rez. Ay, true indeed; when I approach you next,
I'll send a herald to proclaim my coming,
And bow to you by sound of trumpet, Marquis.

De Mon. (*to* Freb. *turning haughtily from* Rezenvelt *with affected indifference.*) How does your cheerful friend, that good old man?

Freb. My cheerful friend? I know not whom you mean.

De Mon. Count Waterlan.

Freb. I know not one so nam'd.

De Mon. (*very confused.*) O pardon me—it was at Bâle I knew him.

Freb. You have not yet inquir'd for honest Reisdale.
I met him as I came, and mention'd you.
He seem'd amaz'd; and fain he would have learnt
What cause procur'd us so much happiness.
He question'd hard, and hardly would believe,
I could not satisfy his strong desire.

Rez. And know you not what brings De Monfort here?

Freb. Truly, I do not.

Rez. O! 'tis love of me.
I have but two short days in Amberg been,
And here with postman's speed he follows me,
Finding his home so dull and tiresome grown.

Freb. (*to* De Mon.) Is Rezenvelt so sadly miss'd with you?
Your town so chang'd?

De Mon. Not altogether so;
Some witlings and jest-mongers still remain
For fools to laugh at.

Rez. But he laughs not, and therefore he is wise.
He ever frowns on them with sullen brow
Contemptuous; therefore he is very wise.
Nay, daily frets his most refined soul
With their poor folly, to its inmost core;
Therefore he is most eminently wise.

Freb. Fy, Rezenvelt! you are too early gay.
Such spirits rise but with the ev'ning glass:
They suit not placid morn.
(*To* De Monfort, *who, after walking impatiently up and down, comes close to his ear, and lays hold of his arm.*)
What would you, Monfort?

De Mon. Nothing—what is't o'clock?
No, no—I had forgot—'tis early still.
(*Turns away again.*)

Freb. (*to* Rez.) Waltser informs me that you have agreed
To read his verses o'er, and tell the truth.
It is a dangerous task.

Rez. Yet I'll be honest:
I can but lose his favor and a feast.

(*Whilst they speak*, De Monfort *walks up and down impatiently and irresolute; at last, pulls the bell violently.*)

Enter SERVANT.

De Mon. (*to* Ser.) What dost thou want?

Ser. I thought your honor rung.

De Mon. I have forgot—stay; are my horses saddled?

Ser. I thought, my Lord, you would not ride to-day,
After so long a journey.

De Mon. (*impatiently.*) Well—'tis good.
Begone!—I want thee not. [EXIT Servant.

Rez. (*smiling significantly.*) I humbly crave your pardon, gentle Marquis.
It grieves me that I cannot stay with you,
And make my visit of a friendly length.
I trust your goodness will excuse me now;
Another time I shall be less unkind.
(*To* Freberg.) Will you not go with me?

Freb. Excuse me, Monfort, I'll return again.
[EXEUNT Rezenvelt *and* Freberg.

De Mon. (*alone, tossing his arms distractedly.*)
Hell hath no greater torment for th' accurs'd
Than this man's presence gives—
Abhorred fiend! he hath a pleasure too,
A damned pleasure in the pain he gives!
Oh! the side glance of that detested eye!
That conscious smile! that full insulting lip!
It touches every nerve: it makes me mad.
What, does it please thee? Dost thou woo my hate?
Hate shalt thou have! determin'd, deadly hate,
Which shall awake no smile. Malignant villain!
The venom of thy mind is rank and devilish,
And thin the film that hides it.
Thy hateful visage ever spoke thy worth:
I loath'd thee when a boy.
That men should be besotted with him thus!
And Freberg likewise so bewitched is,
That, like a hireling flatt'rer, at his heels
He meanly paces, off'ring brutish praise.
O! I could curse him too! [EXIT.

ACT II.

SCENE I.—A VERY SPLENDID APARTMENT IN COUNT FREBERG'S HOUSE, FANCIFULLY DECORATED. A WIDE FOLDING DOOR OPENED, SHEWS ANOTHER MAGNIFICENT ROOM LIGHTED UP TO RECEIVE COMPANY.

Enter through the folding doors the COUNT and COUNTESS, richly dressed.

Freb. (*looking round.*) In truth, I like those decorations well:
They suit those lofty walls. And here, my love,
The gay profusion of a woman's fancy
Is well display'd. Noble simplicity
Becomes us less, on such a night as this,
Than gaudy show.

Lady. Is it not noble then? (*He shakes his head.*) I thought it so;
And as I know you love simplicity,
I did intend it should be simple too.

Freb. Be satisfy'd, I pray; we want to-night
A cheerful banquet-house, and not a temple.
How runs the hour?

Lady. It is not late, but soon we shall be rous'd
With the loud entry of our frolick guests.

Enter a PAGE, richly dressed.

Page. Madam, there is a lady in your hall,
Who begs to be admitted to your presence.

Lady. Is it not one of our invited friends?

Page. No, far unlike to them; it is a stranger.

Lady. How looks her countenance?

Page. So queenly, so commanding, and so noble,
I shrunk at first in awe; but when she smil'd,
For so she did to see me thus abash'd,
Methought I could have compass'd sea and land
To do her bidding.

Lady. Is she young or old?

Page. Neither, if right I guess; but she is fair:
For time hath laid his hand so gently on her,
As he too had been aw'd.

Lady. The foolish stripling!
She has bewitch'd thee. Is she large is stature?

Page. So stately and so graceful in her form,
I thought at first her stature was gigantick;
But on a near approach I found, in truth,
She scarcely does surpass the middle size.

Lady. What is her garb?

Page. I cannot well describe the fashion of it.
She is not deck'd in any gallant trim,
But seems to me clad in the usual weeds

Of high habitual state: for as she moves,
Wide flows her robe in many a waving fold,
As I have seen unfurled banners play
With the soft breeze.

Lady. Thine eyes deceive thee, boy;
It is an apparition thou hast seen.

Freb. (*starting from his seat, where he has been sitting during the conversation between the* Lady *and the* Page.) It is an apparition he has seen.
Or it is Jane De Monfort. [Exit, *hastily.*

Lady. (*displeased.*) No; such description surely suits not her.
Did she inquire for me?

Page. She ask'd to see the lady of Count Freberg.

Lady. Perhaps it is not she—I fear it is—
Ha! here they come. He has but guess'd too well.

Enter Freberg, leading in Jane De Monfort.

Freb. (*presenting her to* Lady.) Here, Madam, welcome a most worthy guest.

Lady. Madam, a thousand welcomes! Pardon me;
I could not guess who honour'd me so far;
I should not else have waited coldly here.

Jane. I thank you for this welcome, gentle Countess;
But take those kind excuses back again;
I am a bold intruder on this hour,
And am entitled to no ceremony.
I came in quest of a dear, truant friend,
But Freberg has inform'd me—
(*To* Freberg.) And he is well you say?

Freb. Yes, well, but joyless.

Jane. It is the usual temper of his mind;
It opens not, but with the thrilling touch
Of some strong heart-string o'the sudden press'd.

Freb. It may be so, I've known him otherwise:
He is suspicious grown.

Jane. Not so, Count Freberg, Monfort is too noble.
Say rather, that he is a man in grief,
Wearing at times a strange and scowling eye;
And thou, less generous than beseems a friend,
Hast thought too hardly of him.

Freb. (*bowing with great respect.*) So will I say;
I'll own nor word nor will, that can offend you.

Lady. De Monfort is engag'd to grace our feast;
Ere long you'll see him here.

Jane. I thank you truly, but this homely dress
Suits not the splendour of such scenes as these.

Freb. (*pointing to her dress.*) Such artless and majestick elegance,
So exquisitely just, so nobly simple,
Will make the gorgeous blush.

Jane. (*smiling.*) Nay, nay, be more consistent, courteous knight,
And do not praise a plain and simple guise
With such profusion of unsimple words.
I cannot join your company to night.

Lady. Not stay to see your brother?

Jane. Therefore it is I would not, gentle hostess.
Here will he find all that can woo the heart
To joy and sweet forgetfulness of pain;
The sight of me would wake his feeling mind
To other thoughts. I am no doting mistress;
No fond distracted wife, who must forthwith
Rush to his arms and weep. I am his sister:
The eldest daughter of his father's house:
Calm and unwearied is my love for him;
And having found him, patiently I'll wait,
Nor greet him in the hour of social joy,
To dash his mirth with tears.—
The night wears on; permit me to withdraw.

Freb. Nay, do not, do not injure us so far!
Disguise thyself, and join our friendly train.

Jane. You wear not masks to night.

Lady. We wear not masks, but you may be conceal'd
Behind the double foldings of a veil.

Jane. (*after pausing to consider.*) In truth, I feel a little so inclin'd.
Methinks unknown, I e'en might speak to him,
And gently prove the temper of his mind;
But for the means I must become your debtor.
(*To* Lady.)

Lady. Who waits? (*Enter her* Woman.) Attend this lady to my wardrobe,
And do what she commands you.
[Exeunt Jane *and* Waiting-woman.

Freb. (*looking after* Jane, *as she goes out, with admiration.*) Oh! what a soul she bears! see how she steps!
Nought but the native dignity of worth
E'er taught the moving form such noble grace.

Lady. Such lofty mien, and high assumed gait
I've seen ere now, and men have call'd it pride.

Freb. No, 'faith! thou never didst, but oft indeed
The paltry imitation thou hast seen.
(*Looking at her.*) How hang those trappings on thy motley gown?
They seem like garlands on a May-day queen,
Which hinds have dress'd in sport.
(Lady *turns away displeased.*)

Freb. Nay, do not frown; I spoke it but in haste:
For thou art lovely still in ev'ry garb.
But see, the guests assemble.

Enter groups of well dressed people, who pay their compliments to Freberg and his Lady; and, followed by her, pass into the inner apartment, where more company appear assembling, as if by another entry.

Freb. (*who remains on the front of the stage with a friend or two.*) How loud the hum of this gay-meeting crowd!
'Tis like a bee-swarm in the noonday sun.
Musick will quell the sound. Who waits without?
Musick strike up.
(*Musick, and when it ceases, enter from the*

inner apartment Rezenvelt, *with several gentlemen, all richly dressed.*)

Freb. (*to those just entered.*) What, lively gallants, quit the field so soon?
Are there no beauties in that moving crowd
To fix your fancy?

Rez. Ay, marry, are there! men of ev'ry fancy
May in that moving crowd some fair one find,
To suit their taste, tho' whimsical and strange,
As ever fancy own'd.
Beauty of every cast and shade is there,
From the perfection of a faultless form,
Down to the common, brown unnoted maid,
Who looks but pretty in her Sunday gown.

1st Gent. There is, indeed, a gay variety.

Rez. And if the liberality of nature
Suffices not, there's store of grafted charms,
Blending in one the sweets of many plants,
So obstinately, strangely opposite,
As would have well defy'd all other art
But female cultivation. Aged youth,
With borrow'd locks in rosy chaplets bound,
Clothes her dim eye, parch'd lips, and skinny cheek
In most unlovely softness:
And youthful age, with fat round trackless face,
The downcast look of contemplation deep
Most pensively assumes.
Is it not even so? The native prude,
With forced laugh, and merriment uncouth,
Plays off the wild coquet's successful charms
With most unskilful pains; and the coquet,
In temporary crust of cold reserve,
Fixes her studied looks upon the ground
Forbiddingly demure.

Freb. Fy! thou art too severe.

Rez. Say, rather, gentle.
I' faith! the very dwarfs attempt to charm
With lofty airs of puny majesty;
Whilst potent damsels of a portly make,
Totter like nurselings, and demand the aid
Of gentle sympathy.
From all those divers modes of dire assault,
He owns a heart of hardest adamant,
Who shall escape to night.

Freb. (*to* De Mon. *who has entered during* Rezenvelt's *speech, and heard the greatest part of it.*) Ha, ha, ha, ha!
How pleasantly he gives his wit the rein,
Yet guides its wild career!

(De Mon. *is silent.*)

Rez. (*smiling archly.*) What, think you, Freberg, the same powerful spell
Of transformation reigns o'er all to-night?
Or that De Monfort is a woman turn'd,
So widely from his native self to swerve,
As grace my folly with a smile of his?

De Mon. Nay, think not, Rezenvelt, there is no smile
I can bestow on thee. There is a smile,
A smile of nature too, which I can spare,
And yet, perhaps, thou wilt not thank me for it. (*Smiles contemptuously.*)

Rez. Not thank thee! It were surely most ungrateful
No thanks to pay for nobly giving me
What, well we see, has cost thee so much pain.
For nature hath her smiles of birth more painful
Than bitt'rest execrations.

Freb. These idle words will lead us to disquiet:
Forbear, forbear, my friends! Go, Rezenvelt,
Accept the challenge of those lovely dames,
Who thro' the portal come with bolder steps
To claim your notice.

(*Enter a group of* Ladies *from the other apartment, who walk slowly across the bottom of the stage, and return to it again.* Rez. *shrugs up his shoulders, as if unwilling to go.*)

1st Gent. (*to* Rez.) Behold in sable veil a lady comes,
Whose noble air doth challenge fancy's skill
To suit it with a countenance as goodly.

(*Pointing to* Jane De Mon. *who now enters in a thick black veil.*)

Rez. Yes, this way lies attraction. (*To* Freb.) With permission, (*Going up to* Jane.)
Fair lady, tho' within that envious shroud
Your beauty deigns not to enlighten us,
We bid you welcome, and our beauties here
Will welcome you the more for such concealment.
With the permission of our noble host—
(*Taking her hand, and leading her to the front of the stage.*)

Jane. (*to* Freb.) Pardon me this presumption, courteous Sir:
I thus appear, (*pointing to her veil,*) not careless of respect
Unto the generous lady of the feast.
Beneath this veil no beauty shrouded is,
That, now, or pain, or pleasure can bestow.
Within the friendly cover of its shade
I only wish, unknown, again to see
One who, alas! is heedless of my pain.

De Mon. Yes, it is ever thus. Undo that veil,
And give thy count'nance to the cheerful light.
Men now all soft, and female beauty scorn,
And mock the gentle cares which aim to please.
It is most damnable! undo thy veil,
And think of him no more.

Jane. I know it well, even to a proverb grown,
Is lovers' faith, and I had borne such slight:
But he, who has, alas! forsaken me,
Was the companion of my early days,
My cradle's mate, mine infant play-fellow.
Within our op'ning minds, with riper years,
The love of praise and gen'rous virtue sprung:
Thro' varied life our pride, our joys were one;
At the same tale we wept: he is my brother.

De Mon. And he forsook thee?—No, I dare not curse him:
My heart upbraids me with a crime like his.

Jane. Ah! do not thus distress a feeling heart.
All sisters are not to the soul entwin'd
With equal banns; thine has not watch'd for thee,
Wept for thee, cheer'd thee, shar'd thy weal and woe,
As I have done for him.

De Mon. (*eagerly.*) Ah! has she not?
By heav'n! the sum of all thy kindly deeds
Were but as chaff pois'd against massy gold,
Compar'd to that which I do owe her love.
Oh pardon me! I mean not to offend—
I am too warm—but she of whom I speak
Is the dear sister of my earliest love;
In noble, virtuous worth to none a second:
And tho' behind those sable folds were hid
As fair a face as ever woman own'd,
Still would I say she is as fair as thou.
How oft amidst the beauty-blazing throng,
I've proudly to th' inquiring stranger told
Her name and lineage! yet within her house,
The virgin mother of an orphan race
Her dying parents left, this noble woman
Did, like a Roman matron, proudly sit,
Despising all the blandishments of love;
Whilst many a youth his hopeless love conceal'd,
O, humbly distant, woo'd her like a queen.
Forgive, I pray you! O forgive this boasting!
In faith! I mean you no discourtesy.

Jane. (*Off her guard, in a soft natural tone of voice.*) Oh no! nor do me any.

De Mon. What voice speaks now? Withdraw, withdraw this shade!
For if thy face bear semblance to thy voice,
I'll fall and worship thee. Pray! pray undo!

(*Puts forth his hand eagerly to snatch away the veil, whilst she shrinks back, and* Rezenvelt *steps between to prevent him.*)

Rez. Stand off: no hand shall lift this sacred veil.

De Mon. What, dost thou think De Monfort fall'n so low,
That there may live a man beneath heav'n's roof,
Who dares to say, he shall not?

Rez. He lives who dares to say—

Jane. (*throwing back her veil, much alarmed, and rushes between them.*) Forbear, forbear!

(Rezenvelt, *very much struck, steps back respectfully, and makes her a low bow.* De Monfort *stands for a while motionless, gazing upon her, till she, looking expressively to him, extends her arms, and he, rushing into them, bursts into tears.* Freberg *seems very much pleased. The company then advancing from the inner apartment, gather about them, and the Scene closes.*)

Scene II.—De Monfort's Apartments.

Enter De Monfort, with a disordered air, and his hand pressed upon his forehead, followed by Jane.

De Mon. No more, my sister, urge me not again:
My secret troubles cannot be reveal'd.
From all participation of its thoughts
My heart recoils: I pray thee be contented.

Jane. What, must I, like a distant humble friend,
Observe thy restless eye, and gait disturb'd,
In timid silence, whilst with yearning heart
I turn aside to weep? O no! De Monfort!
A nobler task thy nobler mind will give;
Thy true entrusted friend I still shall be.

De Mon. Ah, Jane, forbear! I cannot e'en to thee.

Jane. Then, fy upon it! fy upon it, Monfort!
There was a time when e'en with murder stain'd,
Had it been possible that such dire deed
Could e'er have been the crime of one so piteous,
Thou wouldst have told it me.

De Mon. So would I now—but ask of this no more.
All other trouble but the one I feel
I had disclos'd to thee. I pray thee spare me.
It is the secret weakness of my nature.

Jane. Then secret let it be; I urge no farther.
The eldest of our valiant father's hopes,
So sadly orphan'd, side by side we stood,
Like two young trees, whose boughs in early strength
Screen the weak saplings of the rising grove,
And brave the storm together—
I have so long, as if by nature's right,
Thy bosom's inmate and adviser been,
I thought thro' life I should have so remain'd,
Nor ever known a change. Forgive me, Monfort,
A humbler station will I take by thee:
The close attendant of thy wand'ring steps;
The cheerer of this home, with strangers sought;
The soother of those griefs I must not know:
This is mine office now: I ask no more.

De Mon. Oh Jane! thou dost constrain me with thy love!
Would I could tell it thee!

Jane. Thou shalt not tell me. Nay I'll stop mine ears,
Nor from the yearnings of affection wring
What shrinks from utt'rance. Let it pass, my brother.
I'll stay by thee; I'll cheer thee, comfort thee:
Pursue with thee the study of some art,
Or nobler science, that compels the mind
To steady thought progressive, driving forth
All floating, wild, unhappy fantasies;
Till thou, with brow unclouded, smil'st again;
Like one who, from dark visions of the night,
When th' active soul within its lifeless cell
Holds its own world, with dreadful fancy press'd
Of some dire, terrible, or murd'rous deed,
Wakes to the dawning morn, and blesses heaven.

De Mon. It will not pass away: 'twill haunt me still.

Jane. Ah! say not so, for I will haunt thee too;
And be to it so close an adversary,
That, though I wrestle darkling with the fiend,
I shall o'ercome it.

De Mon. Thou most gen'rous woman!
Why do I treat thee thus? It should not be—
And yet I cannot—O that cursed villain!
He will not let me be the man I would.

Jane. What say'st thou, Monfort? Oh! what words are these?
They have awak'd my soul to dreadful thoughts.
I do beseech thee, speak!
(*He shakes his head, and turns from her; she following him.*)
By the affection thou didst ever bear me;
By the dear mem'ry of our infant days;
By kindred living ties, ay, and by those
Who sleep i'the tomb, and cannot call to thee,
I do conjure thee speak!
(*He waves her off with his hand, and covers his face with the other, still turning from her.*)
Ha! wilt thou not?
(*Assuming dignity.*) Then, if affection, most unwearied love,
Tried early, long, and never wanting found,
O'er gen'rous man hath more authority,
More rightful power than crown or sceptre give,
I do command thee.
(*He throws himself into a chair, greatly agitated.*)
De Monfort, do not thus resist my love.
Here I entreat thee on my bended knees.
(*Kneeling.*)
Alas! my brother!
(De Monfort *starts up, and catching her in his arms, raises her up, then placing her in the chair, kneels at her feet.*)

De Mon. Thus let him kneel who should the abased be,
And at thine honour'd feet confession make.
I'll tell thee all—but, oh! thou wilt despise me.
For in my breast a raging passion burns,
To which thy soul no sympathy will own—
A passion which hath made my nightly couch
A place of torment; and the light of day,
With the gay intercourse of social man,
Feel like th' oppressive airless pestilence.
O Jane! thou wilt despise me.

Jane. Say not so:
I never can despise thee, gentle brother.
A lover's jealousy and hopeless pangs
No kindly heart contemns.

De Mon. A lover, sayest thou?
No, it is hate! black, lasting, deadly hate!
Which thus hath driven me forth from kindred peace,
From social pleasure, from my native home,
To be a sullen wand'rer on the earth,
Avoiding all men, cursing and accurs'd.

Jane. De Monfort, this is fiend-like, frightful, terrible!
What being, by th' Almighty Father form'd,
Of flesh and blood, created even as thou,
Could in thy breast such horrid tempest wake,
Who art thyself his fellow?
Unknit thy brows, and spread those wrath-clench'd hands.
Some sprite accurs'd within thy bosom mates
To work thy ruin. Strive with it, my brother!
Strive bravely with it; drive it from thy breast:
'Tis the degrader of a noble heart:
Curse it, and bid it part.

De Mon. It will not part. (*His hand on his breast.*)
I've lodg'd it here too long:
With my first cares I felt its rankling touch;
I loath'd him when a boy.

Jane. Who didst thou say?

De Mon. Oh! that detested Rezenvelt;
E'en in our early sports, like two young whelps
Of hostile breed, instinctively reverse,
Each 'gainst the other pitch'd his ready pledge,
And frown'd defiance. As we onward pass'd
From youth to man's estate, his narrow art
And envious gibing malice, poorly veil'd
In the affected carelessness of mirth,
Still more detestable and odious grew.
There is no living being on this earth
Who can conceive the malice of his soul,
With all his gay and damned merriment,
To those, by fortune or by merit plac'd
Above his paltry self. When, low in fortune,
He look'd upon the state of prosp'rous men,
As nightly birds, rous'd from their murky holes,
Do scowl and chatter at the light of day,
I could endure it; even as we bear
Th' impotent bite of some half-trodden worm,
I could endure it. But when honours came,
And wealth and new-got titles fed his pride;
Whilst flatt'ring knaves did trumpet forth his praise,
And grov'ling idiots grinn'd applauses on him;
Oh! then I could no longer suffer it!
It drove me frantick.—What! what would I give!
What would I give to crush the bloated toad,
So rankly do I loathe him!

Jane. And would thy hatred crush the very man
Who gave to thee that life he might have ta'en?
That life which thou so rashly didst expose
To aim at his? Oh! this is horrible!

De Mon. Ha! thou hast heard it, then?
From all the world,
But most of all from thee, I thought it hid.

Jane. I heard a secret whisper, and resolv'd
Upon the instant to return to thee.
Didst thou receive my letter?

De Mon. I did! I did! 'twas that which drove me hither.
I could not bear to meet thine eye again.

Jane. Alas! that, tempted by a sister's tears,
I ever left thy house! These few past months,
These absent months, have brought us all this woe.

Had I remain'd with thee it had not been.
And yet, methinks, it should not move you thus.
You dar'd him to the field; both bravely fought;
He more adroit disarm'd you; courteously
Return'd the forfeit sword, which, so return'd,
You did refuse to use against him more;
And then, as says report, you parted friends.

De Mon. When he disarm'd this curs'd, this worthless hand
Of its most worthless weapon, he but spar'd
From dev'lish pride, which now derives a bliss
In seeing me thus fetter'd, sham'd, subjected
With the vile favour of his poor forbearance;
Whilst he securely sits with gibing brow,
And basely bates me like a muzzled cur
Who cannot turn again.—
Until that day, till that accursed day,
I knew not half the torment of this hell,
Which burns within my breast. Heaven's lightnings blast him!

Jane. O this is horrible! Forbear, forbear!
Lest heaven's vengeance light upon thy head,
For this most impious wish.

De Mon. Then let it light.
Torments more fell than I have felt already
It cannot send. To be annihilated,
What all men shrink from; to be dust, be nothing,
Were bliss to me, compar'd to what I am!

Jane. O! wouldst thou kill me with these dreadful words?

De Mon. (*raising his hands to heaven.*) Let me but once upon his ruin look,
Then close mine eyes for ever!

(Jane *in great distress, staggers back, and supports herself upon the side scene.* De Mon. *alarmed, runs up to her with a softened voice.*)

Ha! how is this? thou'rt ill; thou'rt very pale.
What have I done to thee? Alas, alas!
I meant not to distress thee.—O my sister!

Jane. (*shaking her head.*) I cannot speak to thee.

De Mon. I have kill'd thee.
Turn, turn thee not away! look on me still!
Oh! droop not thus, my life, my pride, my sister;
Look on me yet again.

Jane. Thou too, De Monfort,
In better days, were wont to be my pride.

De Mon. I am a wretch, most wretched in myself,
And still more wretched in the pain I give.
O curse that villain! that detested villain!
He has spread mis'ry o'er my fated life:
He will undo us all.

Jane. I've held my warfare through a troubled world,
And borne with steady mind my share of ill;
For then the helpmate of my toil wert thou.
But now the wane of life comes darkly on,
And hideous passion tears me from my heart,
Blasting thy worth.—I cannot strive with this.

De Mon. (*affectionately.*) What shall I do?

Jane. Call up thy noble spirit;
Rouse all the gen'rous energy of virtue;
And with the strength of heaven-endued man,
Repel the hideous foe. Be great; be valiant.
O, if thou couldst! e'en shrouded as thou art
In all the sad infirmities of nature,
What a most noble creature wouldst thou be!

De Mon. Ay, if I could: alas! alas! I cannot.

Jane. Thou canst, thou mayst, thou wilt.
We shall not part till I have turn'd thy soul.

Enter MANUEL.

De Mon. Ha! some one enters. Wherefore com'st thou here?

Man. Count Freberg waits your leisure.

De Mon. (*angrily.*) Be gone, be gone!—
I cannot see him now.

[EXIT Manuel.

Jane. Come to my closet; free from all intrusion,
I'll school thee there; and thou again shalt be
My willing pupil, and my gen'rous friend,
The noble Monfort I have lov'd so long,
And must not, will not lose.

De Mon. Do as thou wilt; I will not grieve thee more. [EXEUNT.

ACT III.

SCENE I*.—COUNTESS FREBERG'S DRESSING-ROOM.

Enter the Countess dispirited and out of humour, and throws herself into a chair: enter, by the opposite side, THERESA.

Ther. Madam, I am afraid you are unwell:
What is the matter? does your head ache?

Lady (*peevishly.*) No,
'Tis not my head: concern thyself no more
With what concerns not thee.

Ther. Go you abroad to-night?

Lady. Yes, thinkest thou I'll stay and fret at home?

Ther. Then please to say what you would choose to wear:—
One of your newest robes?

Lady. I hate them all.

Ther. Surely that purple scarf became you well,
With all those wreaths of richly hanging flowers.
Did I not overhear them say, last night,
As from the crowded ball-room ladies past,
How gay and handsome, in her costly dress,
The Countess Freberg look'd?

Lady. Didst thou o'erhear it?

Ther. I did, and more than this.

Lady. Well, all are not so greatly prejudic'd;
All do not think me like a May-day queen,
Which peasants deck in sport.

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* This scene has been very much altered from what it was in the former editions of this play, and scene fifth of the last act will be found to be almost entirely changed. These alterations, though of no great importance, are, I hope, upon the whole, improvements.

Ther. And who said this?
Lady. (*putting her handkerchief to her eyes.*) E'en my good lord, Theresa.
Ther. He said it but in jest. He loves you well.
Lady. I know as well as thou he loves me well;
But what of that! he takes in me no pride:
Elsewhere his praise and admiration go,
And Jane De Monfort is not mortal woman.
Ther. The wondrous character this lady bears
For worth and excellence: from early youth
The friend and mother of her younger sisters,
Now greatly married, as I have been told,
From her most prudent care, may well excuse
The admiration of so good a man
As my good master is. And then, dear Madam,
I must confess, when I myself did hear
How she was come thro' the rough winter's storm,
To seek and comfort an unhappy brother,
My heart beat kindly to her.
Lady. Ay, ay, there is a charm in this I find:
But wherefore may she not have come as well
Through wintry storms to seek a lover too?
Ther. No, Madam, no, I could not think of this.
Lady. That would reduce her in your eyes, mayhap,
To woman's level.—Now I see my vengeance!
I'll tell it round that she is hither come,
Under pretence of finding out De Monfort,
To meet with Rezenvelt. When Freberg hears it,
'Twill help, I ween, to break this magick charm.
Ther. And say what is not, Madam?
Lady. How canst thou know that I shall say what is not?
'Tis like enough I shall but speak the truth.
Ther. Ah no! there is—
Lady. Well, hold thy foolish tongue.
(Freberg's *voice is heard without. After hesitating.*)
I will not see him now. [Exit.
(*Enter* Freberg *by the opposite side, passing on hastily.*)
Ther. Pardon, my lord; I fear you are in haste.
Yet must I crave that you will give to me
The books my Lady mention'd to you: she
Has charg'd me to remind you.
Freb. I'm in haste. (*passing on.*)
Ther. Pray you, my Lord: your Countess wants them much;
The Lady Jane De Monfort ask'd them of her.
Freb. (*returning instantly.*) Are they for her? I knew not this before.
I will, then, search them out immediately.
There is nought good or precious in my keeping,
That is not dearly honor'd by her use.
Ther. My Lord, what would your gentle Countess say
If she o'erheard her own request neglected.
Until supported by a name more potent?
Freb. Think'st thou she is a fool, my good Theresa,
Vainly to please herself with childish thoughts
Of matching what is matchless—Jane De Monfort?
Think'st thou she is a fool, and cannot see,
That love and admiration often thrive
Tho' far apart?
(*Re-enter* Lady *with great violence.*)
Lady. I am a fool, not to have seen full well,
That thy best pleasure in o'erating so
This lofty stranger, is to humble me,
And cast a dark'ning shadow o'er my head.
Ay, wherefore dost thou stare upon me thus?
Art thou asham'd that I have thus surpris'd thee?
Well mayst thou be so!
Freb. True; thou rightly say'st.
Well may I be asham'd: not for the praise
Which I have ever openly bestow'd
On Monfort's noble sister; but that thus,
Like a poor mean and jealous listener,
She should be found, who is Count Freberg's wife.
Lady. Oh I am lost and ruin'd! hated, scorn'd! (*pretending to faint.*)
Freb. Alas, I've been too rough!
(*taking her hand and kissing it tenderly.*)
My gentle love! my own, my only love!
See, she revives again. How art thou, love?
Support her to her chamber, good Theresa.
I'll sit and watch by her. I've been too rough.
[Exeunt Lady, *supported by* Freb. *and* Ther.

Scene II.—De Monfort discovered sitting by a table reading. After a little time he lays down his book, and continues in a thoughtful posture.

Enter to him Jane De Monfort.

Jane. Thanks, gentle brother.—
(*Pointing to the book.*)
Thy willing mind has rightly been employ'd:
Did not thy heart warm at the fair display
Of peace and concord and forgiving love?
De Mon. I know resentment may to love be turn'd;
Tho' keen and lasting, into love as strong:
And fiercest rivals in th' ensanguin'd field
Have cast their brandish'd weapons to the ground,
Joining their mailed breasts in close embrace,
With gen'rous impulse fir'd. I know right well
The darkest, fellest wrongs have been forgiven
Seventy times o'er from blessed heavenly love:
I've heard of things like these; I've heard and wept.
But what is this to me?
Jane. All, all, my brother!
It bids thee too that noble precept learn,
To love thine enemy.
De Mon. Th' uplifted stroke that would a wretch destroy,

Gorg'd with my richest spoil, stain'd with my blood,
I would arrest, and cry, "Hold! hold! have mercy."
But when the man most adverse to my nature;
Who e'en from childhood hath, with rude malevolence,
Withheld the fair respect all paid beside,
Turning my very praise into derision;
Who galls and presses me where'er I go,
Would claim the gen'rous feelings of my heart,
Nature herself doth lift her voice aloud,
And cries, "It is impossible!"

Jane. (*shaking her head.*)—Ah, Monfort, Monfort!

De Mon. I can forgive th' envenom'd reptile's sting,
But hate his loathsome self.

Jane. And canst thou do no more for love of heaven?

De Mon. Alas! I cannot now so school my mind
As holy men have taught, nor search it truly:
But this, my Jane, I'll do for love of thee;
And more it is than crowns could win me to,
Or any power but thine. I'll see the man.
Th' indignant risings of abhorrent nature;
The stern contraction of my scowling brows,
That, like the plant whose closing leaves do shrink
At hostile touch, still knit at his approach;
The crooked curving lip, by instinct taught,
In imitation of disgustful things,
To pout and swell, I strictly will repress;
And meet him with a tamed countenance,
E'en as a townsman, who would live at peace,
And pay him the respect his station claims.
I'll crave his pardon too for all offence
My dark and wayward temper may have done.
Nay more, I will confess myself his debtor
For the forbearance I have curs'd so oft:
Life spar'd by him, more horrid than the grave
With all its dark corruption! This I'll do.
Will it suffice thee? More than this I cannot.

Jane. No more than this do I require of thee
In outward act, tho' in thy heart, my friend,
I hop'd a better change, and still will hope.
I told thee Freberg had propos'd a meeting.

De Mon. I know it well.

Jane. And Rezenvelt consents.
He meets you here; so far he shows respect.

De Mon. Well, let it be; the sooner past the better.

Jane. I'm glad to hear you say so, for, in truth,
He has propos'd for it an early hour.
'Tis almost near his time; I came to tell you.

De Mon. What, comes he here so soon? shame on his speed!
It is not decent thus to rush upon me.
He loves the secret pleasure he will feel
To see me thus subdu'd.

Jane. O say not so! he comes with heart sincere.

De Mon. Could we not meet elsewhere? from home—i' the fields,
Where other men—must I alone receive him?
Where is your agent, Freberg, and his friends,
That I must meet him here?
(*Walks up and down very much disturbed.*)
Now didst thou say?—how goes the hour?—e'en now!
I would some other friend were first arriv'd.

Jane. See, to thy wish come Freberg and his dame.

De Mon. His lady too! why comes he not alone?
Must all the world stare upon our meeting?

Enter COUNT FREBERG and his Countess.

Freb. A happy morrow to my noble marquis
And his most noble sister!

Jane. Gen'rous Freberg,
Your face, methinks, forebodes a happy morn,
Open and cheerful. What of Rezenvelt?

Freb. I left him at his home, prepar'd to follow:
He'll soon appear. (*To* De Monfort.) And now, my worthy friend,
Give me your hand; this happy change delights me.
(De Monfort *gives him his hand coldly, and they walk to the bottom of the stage together, in earnest discourse, whilst* Jane *and the* Countess *remain in the front.*)

Lady. My dearest Madam, will you pardon me?
I know Count Freberg's bus'ness with De Monfort,
And had a strong desire to visit you,
So much I wish the honour of your friendship;
For he retains no secret from mine ear.

Jane. (*archly.*) Knowing your prudence—You are welcome, Madam;
So shall Count Freberg's lady ever be.
(De Monfort *and* Freberg, *returning towards the front of the stage, still engaged in discourse.*)

Freb. He is indeed a man, within whose breast
Firm rectitude and honour hold their seat,
Tho' unadorned with that dignity
Which were their fittest garb. Now, on my life!
I know no truer heart than Rezenvelt.

De Mon. Well, Freberg, well, there needs not all this pains
To garnish out his worth: let it suffice;
I am resolv'd I will respect the man,
As his fair station and repute demand.
Methinks I see not at your jolly feasts
The youthful knight, who sung so pleasantly.

Freb. A pleasant circumstance detains him hence;
Pleasant to those who love high gen'rous deeds
Above the middle pitch of common minds;
And, tho' I have been sworn to secrecy,
Yet must I tell it thee.
This knight is near akin to Rezenvelt,
To whom an old relation, short while dead,
A good estate bequeathed, some leagues distant.

But Rezenvelt, now rich in fortune's store,
Disdain'd the sordid love of further gain,
And gen'rously the rich bequest resign'd
To this young man, blood of the same degree
To the deceas'd, and low in fortune's gifts,
Who is from hence to take possession of it:
Was it not nobly done?

De Mon. 'Twas right and honourable.
This morning is oppressive, warm, and heavy:
There hangs a foggy closeness in the air;
Dost thou not feel it?

Freb. O no! to think upon a gen'rous deed
Expands my soul, and makes me lightly breathe.

De Mon. Who gives the feast to-night? His name escapes me.
You say I am invited

Freb. Old Count Waterlan.
In honour of your townsman's gen'rous gift,
He spreads the board.

De Mon. He is too old to revel with the gay.

Freb. But not too old is he to honour virtue.
I shall partake of it with open soul;
For, on my honest faith, of living men
I know not one, for talents, honour, worth,
That I should rank superiour to Rezenvelt.

De Mon. How virtuous he hath been in three short days!

Freb. Nay, longer, Marquis; but my friendship rests
Upon the good report of other men,
And that has told me much.

(De Monfort *aside, going some steps hastily from* Freberg, *and rending his cloak with agitation as he goes.*)

Would he were come! by heaven I would he were!
This fool besets me so.

(*Suddenly correcting himself, and joining the* Ladies, *who have retired to the bottom of the stage, he speaks to* Countess Freberg *with affected cheerfulness.*)

The sprightly dames of Amberg rise by times,
Untarnish'd with the vigils of the night.

Lady. Praise us not rashly, 'tis not always so.

De Mon. He does not rashly praise who praises you;
For he were dull indeed—

(*Stopping short, as if he heard something.*)

Lady. How dull indeed?

De Mon. I should have said—It has escap'd me now—

(*Listening again, as if he heard something.*)

Jane. (*to* De Mon.) What, hear you aught?

De Mon. (*hastily.*) 'Tis nothing.

Lady. (*to* De Mon.) Nay, do not let me lose it so, my Lord.
Some fair one has bewitch'd your memory,
And robs me of the half-form'd compliment.

Jane. Half-utter'd praise is to the curious mind
As to the eye half-veiled beauty is,
More precious than the whole. Pray pardon him.
Some one approaches. (*Listening.*)

Freb. No, no, it is a servant who ascends;
He will not come so soon.

De Mon. (*off his guard.*) 'Tis Rezenvelt: I heard his well-known foot,
From the first staircase, mounting step by step.

Freb. How quick an ear thou hast for distant sound!
I heard him not.

(De Monfort *looks embarrassed, and is silent.*)

Enter Rezenvelt.

(De Monfort, *recovering himself, goes up to receive* Rezenvelt, *who meets him with a cheerful countenance.*)

De Mon. (*to* Rez.) I am, my Lord, beholden to you greatly.
This ready visit makes me much your debtor.

Rez. Then may such debts between us, noble Marquis,
Be oft incurr'd, and often paid again!
(*To* Jane.) Madam, I am devoted to your service,
And ev'ry wish of yours commands my will.
(*To* Countess.) Lady, good morning. (*To* Freb.) Well, my gentle friend,
You see I have not linger'd long behind.

Freb. No, thou art sooner than I look'd for thee.

Rez. A willing heart adds feather to the heel,
And makes the clown a winged Mercury.

De Mon. Then let me say, that, with a grateful mind,
I do receive these tokens of good will;
And must regret, that, in my wayward moods,
I have too oft forgot the due regard
Your rank and talents claim.

Rez. No, no, De Monfort,
You have but rightly curb'd a wanton spirit,
Which makes me too neglectful of respect.
Let us be friends, and think of this no more.

Freb. Ay, let it rest with the departed shades
Of things which are no more; whilst lovely concord,
Follow'd by friendship sweet, and firm esteem,
Your future days enrich. O heavenly friendship!
Thou dost exalt the sluggish souls of men,
By thee conjoin'd, to great and glorious deeds;
As two dark clouds, when mix'd in middle air,
The vivid lightning's flash, and roar sublime.
Talk not of what is past, but future love.

De Mon. (*with dignity.*) No, Freberg, no, it must not. (*To* Rezenvelt.) No, my Lord,
I will not offer you an hand of concord,
And poorly hide the motives which constrain me.
I would that, not alone, these present friends,
But ev'ry soul in Amberg were assembled,
That I, before them all, might here declare
I owe my spared life to your forbearance.
(*Holding out his hand.*) Take this from one who boasts no feeling warmth,
But never will deceive.

(Jane *smiles upon* De Monfort *with great ap-*

probation, and Rezenvelt *runs up to him with open arms.*)

Rez. Away with hands! I'll have thee to my breast.
Thou art, upon my faith, a noble spirit!

De Mon. (*shrinking back from him.*) Nay, if you please, I am not so prepar'd—
My nature is of temp'rature too cold—
I pray you pardon me. (Jane's *countenance changes.*)
But take this hand, the token of respect;
The token of a will inclin'd to concord;
The token of a mind, that bears within
A sense impressive of the debt it owes you:
And cursed be its power, unnerv'd its strength,
If e'er again it shall be lifted up
To do you any harm.

Rez. Well, be it so, De Monfort, I'm contented;
I'll take thy hand, since I can have no more,
(*Carelessly.*) I take of worthy men whate'er they give.
Their heart I gladly take, if not, their hand!
If that too is withheld, a courteous word,
Or the civility of placid looks:
And, if e'en these are too great favours deem'd,
'Faith, I can set me down contentedly
With plain and homely greeting, or "God save ye!"

De Mon. (*aside, starting away from him some paces.*)
By the good light, he makes a jest of it!

(Jane *seems greatly distressed, and* Freberg *endeavours to cheer her.*)

Freb. (*to* Jane.) Cheer up, my noble friend; all will go well;
For friendship is no plant of hasty growth.
Tho' rooted in esteem's deep soil, the slow
And gradual culture of kind intercourse
Must bring it to perfection.
(*To the* Countess.) My love, the morning, now, is far advanc'd;
Our friends elsewhere expect us; take your leave.

Lady. (*to* Jane.) Farewell, dear Madam, till the ev'ning hour.

Freb. (*to* De Mon.) Good day, De Monfort. (*To* Jane.) Most devoutly yours.

Rez. (*to* Freb.) Go not too fast, for I will follow you.

[Exeunt Freberg *and his* Lady.

(*To* Jane.) the Lady Jane is yet a stranger here:
She might, perhaps, in this your ancient city
Find somewhat worth her notice.

Jane. I thank you, Marquis, I am much engag'd;
I go not out to-day.

Rez. Then fare ye well! I see I cannot now
Be the proud man who shall escort you forth,
And show to all the world my proudest boast,
The notice and respect of Jane De Monfort.

De Mon. (*aside impatiently.*) He says farewell, and goes not!

Jane. (*to* Rez.) You do me honour.

Rez. Madam, adieu! (*To* Jane.) Good morning, noble Marquis. [Exit.

(Jane *and* De Monfort *look expressively to one another without speaking, and then* Exeunt *severally.*)

ACT IV.

Scene I.—A hall or ante-chamber, with the folding doors of an inner apartment open, which discovers the guests rising from a banquet.

They enter and pass over the stage and Exeunt; and after them enter Rezenvelt and Freberg.

Freb. Alas, my Rezenvelt!
I vainly hop'd the hand of gentle peace,
From this day's reconciliation sprung,
These rude unseemly jarrings had subdu'd;
But I have mark'd, e'en at the social board,
Such looks, such words, such tones, such untold things,
Too plainly told, 'twixt you and Monfort pass,
That I must now despair.
Yet who could think, two minds so much refin'd,
So near in excellence, should be remov'd,
So far remov'd, in gen'rous sympathy?

Rez. Ay, far remov'd indeed!

Freb. And yet, methought, he made a noble effort,
And with a manly plainness bravely told
The galling debt he owes to your forbearance.

Rez. 'Faith! so he did, and so did I receive it;
When, with spread arms, and heart e'en mov'd to tears,
I frankly proffer'd him a friend's embrace:
And, I declare, had he as such receiv'd it,
I from that very moment had forborne
All opposition, pride-provoking jest,
Contemning carelessness, and all offence;
And had caress'd him as a worthy heart,
From native weakness such indulgence claiming.
But since he proudly thinks that cold respect,
The formal tokens of his lordly favour,
So precious are, that I would sue for them
As fair distinction in the publick eye,
Forgetting former wrongs, I spurn it all.
And but that I do bear that noble woman,
His worthy, his incomparable sister,
Such fix'd profound regard, I would expose him;
And as a mighty bull, in senseless rage,
Rous'd at the baiter's will, with wretched rags
Of ire-provoking scarlet, chafes and bellows,
I'd make him at small cost of paltry wit,
With all his deep and manly faculties,
The scorn and laugh of fools.

Freb. For heaven's sake, my friend, restrain your wrath!
For what has Monfort done of wrong to you,
Or you to him, bating one foolish quarrel,

Which you confess from slight occasion rose,
That in your breasts such dark resentment dwells,
So fix'd, so hopeless?
Rez. O! from our youth he has distinguish'd me
With ev'ry mark of hatred and disgust.
For e'en in boyish sports I still oppos'd
His proud pretensions to pre-eminence;
Nor would I to his ripen'd greatness give
That fulsome adulation of applause
A senseless crowd bestow'd. Tho' poor in fortune,
I still would smile at vain-assuming wealth:
But when unlook'd-for fate on me bestow'd
Riches and splendour equal to his own,
Tho' I, in truth, despise such poor distinction,
Feeling inclin'd to be at peace with him,
And with all men besides, I curb'd my spirit,
And sought to soothe him. Then, with spiteful rage,
From small offence he rear'd a quarrel with me,
And dar'd me to the field. The rest you know.
In short, I still have been th' opposing rock,
O'er which the stream of his o'erflowing pride
Hath foam'd and fretted. See'st thou how it is?
Freb. Too well I see, and warn thee to beware.
Such streams have oft, by swelling floods surcharg'd,
Borne down, with sudden and impetuous force,
The yet unshaken stone of opposition,
Which had for ages stopp'd their flowing course.
I pray thee, friend, beware.
Rez. Thou canst not mean—he will not murder me?
Freb. What a proud heart, with such dark passion toss'd,
May, in the anguish of its thoughts, conceive,
I will not dare to say.
Rez. Ha, ha! thou know'st him not.
Full often have I mark'd it in his youth,
And could have almost lov'd him for the weakness:
He's form'd with such antipathy, by nature,
To all infliction of corporeal pain,
To wounding life, e'en to the sight of blood,
He cannot if he would.
Freb. Then fy upon thee!
It is not gen'rous to provoke him thus.
But let us part: we'll talk of this again.
Something approaches.—We are here too long.
Rez. Well, then, to-morrow I'll attend your call.
Here lies my way. Good night. [EXIT.

Enter CONRAD.

Con. Forgive, I pray, my Lord, a stranger's boldness.
I have presum'd to wait your leisure here,
Though at so late an hour.
Freb. But who art thou?
Con. My name is Conrad, Sir,
A humble suitor to your honour's goodness,
Who is the more embolden'd to presume,
In that De Monfort's brave and noble Marquis
Is so much fam'd for good and gen'rous deeds.
Freb. You are mistaken, I am not the man.
Con. Then, pardon me: I thought I could not err;
That mien so dignified, that piercing eye
Assur'd me it was he.
Freb. My name is not De Monfort, courteous stranger;
But, if you have a favour to request,
I may, with him, perhaps, befriend your suit.
Con. I thank your honour, but I have a friend
Who will commend me to De Monfort's favour:
The Marquis Rezenvelt has known me long,
Who, says report, will soon become his brother.
Freb. If thou wouldst seek thy ruin from De Monfort,
The name of Rezenvelt employ, and prosper;
But, if aught good, use any name but his.
Con. How may this be?
Freb. I cannot now explain.
Early to-morrow call upon Count Freberg;
So am I call'd, each burgher knows my house,
And there instruct me how to do you service.
Good-night. [EXIT.
Con. (*alone.*) Well, this mistake may be of service to me:
And yet my bus'ness I will not unfold
To this mild, ready, promise-making courtier;
I've been by such too oft deceiv'd already.
But if such violent enmity exists
Between De Monfort and this Rezenvelt,
He'll prove my advocate by opposition.
For if De Monfort would reject my suit,
Being the man whom Rezenvelt esteems,
Being the man he hates, a cord as strong,
Will he not favour me? I'll think of this.
[EXIT.

SCENE II.—A LOWER APARTMEMT IN JEROME'S HOUSE, WITH A WIDE FOLDING GLASS DOOR, LOOKING INTO A GARDEN, WHERE THE TREES AND SHRUBS ARE BROWN AND LEAFLESS.

Enter DE MONFORT with a thoughtful frowning aspect, and paces slowly across the stage, Jerome following behind him, with a timid step. De Monfort hearing him, turns suddenly about.

De Mon. (*angrily.*) Who follows me to this sequester'd room?
Jer. I have presum'd, my Lord. 'Tis somewhat late:
I am inform'd you eat at home to-night;
Here is a list of all the dainty fare

My busy search has found; please to peruse it.

De Mon. Leave me! begone! Put hemlock in thy soup,
Or deadly night-shade, or rank hellebore,
And I will mess upon it.

Jer. Heaven forbid!
Your honour's life is all too precious, sure—

De Mon. (*sternly.*) Did I not say begone?

Jer. Pardon, my Lord, I'm old, and oft forget. [Exit.

De Mon. (*looking after him, as if his heart smote him.*) Why will they thus mistime their foolish zeal,
That I must be so stern?
O, that I were upon some desert coast!
Where howling tempests and the lashing tide
Would stun me into deep and senseless quiet;
As the storm-beaten trav'ller droops his head,
In heavy, dull, lethargick weariness,
And, 'midst the roar of jarring elements,
Sleeps to awake no more.
What am I grown? all things are hateful to me.

Enter Manuel.

(*Stamping with his foot.*) Who bids thee break upon my privacy?

Man. Nay, good my Lord! I heard you speak aloud,
And dreamt not, surely, that you were alone.

De Mon. What, dost thou watch, and pin thine ears to holes,
To catch those exclamations of the soul,
Which heaven alone should hear? Who hir'd thee, pray?
Who basely hir'd thee for a task like this?

Man. My Lord, I cannot hold. For fifteen years,
Long-troubled years, I have your servant been,
Nor hath the proudest lord in all the realm,
With firmer, with more honourable faith
His sov'reign serv'd, than I have served you;
But if my honesty is doubted now,
Let him who is more faithful take my place,
And serve you better.

De Mon. Well, be it as thou wilt. Away with thee!
Thy loud-mouth'd boasting is no rule for me
To judge thy merit by.

Enter Jerome hastily, and pulls Manuel away.

Jer. Come, Manuel, come away; thou art not wise.
The stranger must depart and come again,
For now his honour will not be disturb'd.
[Exit Manuel *sulkily.*

De Mon. A stranger said'st thou?
(*Drops his handkerchief.*)

Jer. I did, good Sir, but he shall go away;
You shall not be disturb'd.
(*Stooping to lift the handkerchief.*)
You have dropp'd somewhat.

De Mon. (*preventing him.*) Nay, do not stoop, my friend! I pray thee not!
Thou art too old to stoop.—
I'm much indebted to thee.—Take this ring—
I love thee better than I seem to do.
I pray thee do it—thank me not.—What stranger?

Jer. A man who does most earnestly entreat
To see your honour; but I know him not.

De Mon. Then let him enter.
[Exit Jerome.

A pause. Enter Conrad.

De Mon. You are the stranger who would speak with me?

Con. I am so far unfortunate, my Lord,
That, though my fortune on your favour hangs,
I am to you a stranger.

De Mon. How may this be? What can I do for you?

Con. Since thus your Lordship does so frankly ask,
The tiresome preface of apology
I will forbear, and tell my tale at once.—
In plodding drudgery I've spent my youth,
A careful penman in another's office;
And now, my master and employer dead,
They seek to set a stripling o'er my head,
And leave me on to drudge, e'en to old age,
Because I have no friend to take my part.
It is an office in your native town,
For I am come from thence, and I am told
You can procure it for me. Thus, my Lord,
From the repute of goodness which you bear,
I have presum'd to beg.

De Mon. They have befool'd thee with a false report.

Con. Alas! I see it is in vain to plead.
Your mind is prepossess'd against a wretch,
Who has, unfortunately for his weal,
Offended the revengeful Rezenvelt.

De Mon. What dost thou say?

Con. What I, perhaps, had better leave unsaid.
Who will believe my wrongs if I complain?
I am a stranger, Rezenvelt my foe,
Who will believe my wrongs?

De Mon. (*eagerly catching him by the coat.*)
I will believe them!
Though they were base as basest, vilest deeds,
In ancient record told, I would believe them!
Let not the smallest atom of unworthiness
That he has put upon thee be conceal'd.
Speak boldly, tell it all; for, by the light!
I'll be thy friend, I'll be thy warmest friend,
If he has done thee wrong.

Con. Nay, pardon me, it were not well advis'd,
If I should speak so freely of the man
Who will so soon your nearest kinsman be.

De Mon. What canst thou mean by this?

Con. That Marquis Rezenvelt
Has pledg'd his faith unto your noble sister,
And soon will be the husband of her choice.
So I am told, and so the world believes.

De Mon. 'Tis false! 'tis basely false!
What wretch could drop from his envenom'd tongue
A tale so damn'd?—It chokes my breath—
(*stamping with his foot.*) What wretch did tell it thee?

Con. Nay, every one with whom I have convers'd
Has held the same discourse. I judge it not.
But you, my Lord, who with the lady dwell,
You best can tell what her deportment speaks;
Whether her conduct and unguarded words
Belie such rumour.

(De Monfort *pauses, staggers backwards, and sinks into a chair; then starting up hastily.*)

De Mon. Where am I now? 'midst all the cursed thoughts,
That on my soul like stinging scorpions prey'd,
This never came before——Oh, if it be!
The thought will drive me mad.—Was it for this
She urg'd her warm request on bended knee?
Alas! I wept, and thought of sister's love,
No damned love like this.
Fell devil! 'tis hell itself has lent thee aid
To work such sorcery! (*Pauses.*) I'll not believe it,
I must have proof clear as the noon-day sun
For such foul charge as this! Who waits without?

(*Paces up and down, furiously agitated.*)

Con. (*aside.*) What have I done? I've carried this too far.
I've rous'd a fierce ungovernable madman.

Enter Jerome.

De Mon. (*in a loud angry voice.*) Where did she go, at such an early hour,
And with such slight attendance?

Jer. Of whom inquires your honour?

De Mon. Why, of your lady. Said I not my sister?

Jer. The Lady Jane, your sister?

De Mon. (*in a faltering voice.*) Yes, I did call her so.

Jer. In truth, I cannot tell you where she went.
E'en now, from the short beechen walk hard by,
I saw her through the garden-gate return.
The Marquis Rezenvelt, and Freberg's Countess,
Are in her company. This way they come,
As being nearer to the back apartments;
But I shall stop them if it be your will,
And bid them enter here.

De Mon. No, stop them not. I will remain unseen,
And mark them as they pass. Draw back a little.

(Conrad *seems alarmed, and steals off unnoticed.* De Monfort *grasps* Jerome *tightly by the hand, and drawing back with him two or three steps, not to be seen from the garden, waits in silence, with his eyes fixed on the glass door.*)

De Mon. I hear their footsteps on the grating sand:
How like the croaking of a carrion bird,
That hateful voice sounds to the distant ear!
And now she speaks—her voice sounds cheerly too—
Curs'd be their mirth!—
Now, now, they come; keep closer still! keep steady!

(*Taking hold of* Jerome *with both hands.*)

Jer. My Lord, you tremble much.

De Mon. What, do I shake?

Jer. You do, in truth, and your teeth chatter too.

De Mon. See! see they come! he strutting by her side.

(Jane, Rezenvelt, *and* Countess Freberg *appear through the glass door, pursuing their way up a short walk leading to the other wing of the house.*)

See, his audacious face he turns to hers;
Utt'ring with confidence some nauseous jest.
And she endures it too—Oh! this looks vilely!
Ha! mark that courteous motion of his arm—
What does he mean?—he dares not take her hand!
(*Pauses and looks eagerly.*) By heaven and hell he does!

(*Letting go his hold of* Jerome, *he throws out his hands vehemently, and thereby pushes him against the scene.*)

Jer. Oh! I am stunn'd! my head is crack'd in twain:
Your honour does forget how old I am.

De Mon. Well, well, the wall is harder than I wist.
Begone, and whine within.

[Exit Jerome, *with a sad rueful countenance.*

(De Monfort *comes forward to the front of the stage, and makes a long pause, expressive of great agony of mind.*)

It must be so: each passing circumstance;
Her hasty journey here; her keen distress
Whene'er my soul's abhorrence I express'd;
Ay, and that damned reconciliation,
With tears extorted from me: Oh, too well!
All, all too well bespeak the shameful tale.
I should have thought of heaven and hell conjoin'd,
The morning star mixed with infernal fire,
Ere I had thought of this—
Hell's blackest magick, in the midnight hour,
With horrid spells and incantation dire,
Such combination opposite, unseemly,
Of fair and loathsome, excellent and base,
Did ne'er produce—But every thing is possible,
So as it may my misery enhance!
Oh! I did love her with such pride of soul!
When other men, in gay pursuit of love,
Each beauty follow'd, by her side I stay'd;
Far prouder of a brother's station there,
Than all the favours favour'd lovers boast.
We quarrel'd once, and when I could no more
The alter'd coldness of her eye endure,
I slipp'd o'tip-toe to her chamber-door;
And when she ask'd who gently knock'd—Oh! oh!
Who could have thought of this?

(*Throws himself into a chair, covers his face with his hand, and bursts into tears. After some time he starts up from his seat furiously.*)

Hell's direst torment seize the infernal villain!
Detested of my soul! I will have vengeance!

I'll crush thy swelling pride—I'll still thy vaunting—
I'll do a deed of blood!—Why shrink I thus?
If, by some spell or magick sympathy,
Piercing the lifeless figure on that wall
Could pierce his bosom too, would I not cast it? (*Throwing a dagger against the wall.*)
Shall groans and blood affright me? No, I'll do it.
Tho' gasping life beneath my pressure heav'd,
And my soul shudder'd at the horrid brink,
I would not flinch.—Fye, this recoiling nature!
O that his sever'd limbs were strew'd in air,
So as I saw it not!

Enter REZENVELT behind from the glass door. DE MONFORT turns round, and on seeing him starts back, then drawing his sword, rushes furiously upon him.

Detested robber! now all forms are over;
Now open villany, now open hate!
Defend thy life!

Rez. De Monfort, thou art mad.

De Mon. Speak not, but draw. Now for thy hated life!

(*They fight:* Rezenvelt *parries his thrusts with great skill, and at last disarms him.*)

Then take my life, black fiend, for hell assists thee.

Rez. No, Monfort, but I'll take away your sword,
Not as a mark of disrespect to you,
But for your safety. By to-morrow's eve
I'll call on you myself and give it back;
And then, if I am charg'd with any wrong,
I'll justify myself. Farewell, strange man! [EXIT.

(De Monfort *stands for some time quite motionless, like one stupified. Enters to him a* Servant: *he starts.*)

De Mon. Ha! who art thou?

Ser. 'Tis I, an' please your honour.

De Mon. (*staring wildly at him.*) Who art thou?

Ser. Your servant Jacques.

De Mon. Indeed I knew thee not.
Leave me, and when Rezenvelt is gone,
Return and let me know.

Ser. He's gone already.

De Mon. How! is he gone so soon?

Ser. His servant told me,
He was in haste to go; as night comes on,
And at the ev'ning hour he purposes
To visit some old friend, whose lonely mansion
Stands a short mile beyond the farther wood,
In which a convent is of holy Nuns
Who chaunt this night a requiem to the soul
Of a departed sister. For so well
He loves such solemn musick, he has order'd
His horses onward by the usual road,
Meaning on foot to cross the wood alone.
So says his knave. Good may it do him, sooth!
I would not walk thro' those wild dells alone
For all his wealth. For there, as I have heard,
Foul murders have been done, and ravens scream;
And things unearthly, stalking through the night,
Have scar'd the lonely trav'ller from his wits.
(De Monfort *stands fixed in thought.*)
I've ta'en your mare, an' please you, from her field,
And wait your farther orders.
(De Monfort *heeds him not.*)
Her hoofs are sound, and where the saddle gall'd,
Begins to mend. What further must be done?
(De Monfort *still heeds him not.*)
His honour heeds me not. Why should I stay?

De Mon. (*eagerly, as he is going.*) He goes alone, saidst thou?

Ser. His servant told me so.

De Mon. And at what hour?

Ser. He 'parts from Amberg by the fall of eve.
Save you, my Lord! how chang'd your count'nance is!
Are you not well?

De Mon. Yes, I am well: begone,
And wait my orders by the city wall:
I'll that way bend, and speak to thee again. [EXIT Servant.

(De Monfort *walks rapidly two or three times across the stage; then seizes his dagger from the wall; looks steadfastly at its point, and* EXIT *hastily.*)

SCENE III.—MOONLIGHT. A WILD PATH IN A WOOD, SHADED WITH TREES.

Enter DE MONFORT, with a strong expression of disquiet, mixed with fear, upon his face, looking behind him, and bending his ear to the ground, as if he listened to something.

De Mon. How hollow groans the earth beneath my tread!
Is there an echo here? Methinks it sounds
As tho' some heavy footstep follow'd me.
I will advance no farther.
Deep settled shadows rest across the path,
And thickly-tangled boughs o'erhang this spot.
O that a tenfold gloom did cover it!
That 'midst the murky darkness I might strike;
As in the wild confusion of a dream,
Things horrid, bloody, terrible do pass,
As tho' they pass'd not; nor impress the mind
With the fix'd clearness of reality.
(*An owl is heard screaming near him.*)
(*Starting.*) What sound is that?
(*Listens, and the owl cries again.*)
It is the screech-owl's cry.
Foul bird of night! what spirit guides thee here?
Art thou instinctive drawn to scenes of horrour?
I've heard of this. (*Pauses and listens.*)
How those fall'n leaves so rustle on the path,
With whisp'ring noise, as tho' the earth around me
Did utter secret things!
The distant river too, bears to mine ear
A dismal wailing. O mysterious night!



Thou art not silent; many tongues hast thou.
A distant gath'ring blast sounds thro' the wood,
And dark clouds fleetly hasten o'er the sky:
O! that a storm would rise, a raging storm;
Amidst the roar of warring elements
I'd lift my hand and strike! but this pale light,
The calm distinctness of each stilly thing,
Is terrible. (*Starting.*) Footsteps are near—
He comes! he comes! I'll watch him farther on—
I cannot do it here. [EXIT.

Enter REZENVELT, and continues his way slowly from the bottom of the stage: as he advances to the front, the owl screams, he stops and listens, and the owl screams again.

Rez. Ha! does the night-bird greet me on my way?
How much his hooting is in harmony
With such a scene as this! I like it well.
Oft when a boy, at the still twilight hour,
I've leant my back against some knotted oak,
And loudly mimick'd him, till to my call
He answer would return, and, thro' the gloom,
We friendly converse held.
Between me and the star-bespangled sky,
Those aged oaks their crossing branches wave,
And thro' them looks the pale and placid moon.
How like a crocodile, or winged snake,
Yon sailing cloud bears on its dusky length!
And now transformed by the passing wind,
Methinks it seems a flying Pegasus.
Ay, but a shapeless band of blacker hue
Come swiftly after.—
A hollow murm'ring wind sounds thro' the trees;
I hear it from afar; this bodes a storm.
I must not linger here—
(*A bell heard at some distance.*)
The convent bell.
'Tis distant still: it tells their hour of prayer.
It sends a solemn sound upon the breeze,
That, to a fearful superstitious mind,
In such a scene, would like a death-knell come. [EXIT.

ACT V.

SCENE I.—THE INSIDE OF A CONVENT CHAPEL, OF OLD GOTHIC ARCHITECTURE, ALMOST DARK: TWO TORCHES ONLY ARE SEEN AT A DISTANCE, BURNING OVER A NEWLY-COVERED* GRAVE. LIGHTNING IS SEEN FLASHING THROUGH THE WINDOWS, AND THUNDER HEARD, WITH THE SOUND OF WIND BEATING UPON THE BUILDING.

Enter two MONKS.

1st Monk. The storm increases: hark how dismally
It howls along the cloisters. How goes time?
2d Monk. It is the hour: I hear them near at hand:
And when the solemn requiem has been sung
For the departed sister, we'll retire.
Yet, should this tempest still more violent grow,
We'll beg a friendly shelter till the morn.
1st Monk. See, the procession enters: let us join.
(*The organ strikes up a solemn prelude.*)

Enter a procession of NUNS, with the ABBESS, bearing torches. After compassing the grave twice, and remaining there some time, the organ plays a grand dirge, whilst they stand round the grave.

SONG BY THE NUNS.

Departed soul, whose poor remains
This hallow'd lowly grave contains;
Whose passing storm of life is o'er,
Whose pains and sorrows are no more;
Bless'd be thou with the bless'd above!
Where all is joy, and purity, and love.

Let HIM, in might and mercy dread,
Lord of the living and the dead;
In whom the stars of heav'n rejoice,
And the ocean lifts its voice;
Thy spirit, purified, to glory raise,
To sing with holy saints his everlasting praise!

Departed soul, who in this earthly scene
Hast our lowly sister been,
Swift be thy way to where the blessed dwell!
Until we meet thee there, farewell! farewell!

Enter a young PENSIONER, with a wild terrified look, her hair and dress all scattered, and rushes forward amongst them.

Abb. Why com'st thou here, with such disorder'd looks,
To break upon our sad solemnity?
Pen. Oh! I did hear thro' the receding blast,
Such horrid cries! they made my blood run chill.
Abb. 'Tis but the varied voices of the storm,
Which many times will sound like distant screams:
It has deceiv'd thee.
Pen. O no, for twice it call'd, so loudly call'd,
With horrid strength, beyond the pitch of nature;
And Murder! murder! was the dreadful cry.
A third time it return'd with feeble strength,
But o'the sudden ceas'd, as tho' the words
Were smother'd rudely in the grappled throat,
And all was still again, save the wild blast
Which at a distance growl'd—
Oh! it will never from my mind depart!
That dreadful cry, all i'the instant still'd:
For then, so near, some horrid deed was done,

*I have put above *newly-covered* instead of *new-made* grave, as it stands in the former editions, because I wish not to give the idea of a funeral procession, but merely that of a hymn or requiem sung over the grave of a person who has been recently buried.

And none to rescue.
Abb. Where didst thou hear it?
Pen. In the higher cells,
As now a window, open'd by the storm,
I did attempt to close.
1st Monk. I wish our brother Bernard were arriv'd;
He is upon his way.
Abb. Be not alarm'd; it still may be deception.
'Tis meet we finish our solemnity,
Nor show neglect unto the honour'd dead.
(*Gives a sign, and the organ plays again: just as it ceases a loud knocking is heard without.*)
Abb. Ha! who may this be? hush!
(*knocking heard again.*)
2d Monk. It is the knock of one in furious haste.
Hush! hush! What footsteps come? Ha! brother Bernard.

Enter Bernard bearing a lantern.

1st Monk. See, what a look he wears of stiffen'd fear!
Where hast thou been, good brother?
Bern. I've seen a horrid sight!
(*All gathering round him and speaking at once.*)
What hast thou seen?
Bern. As on I hasten'd, bearing thus my light,
Across the path, not fifty paces off,
I saw a murder'd corse, stretch'd on his back,
Smear'd with new blood, as tho' but newly slain.
Abb. A man or woman was't?
Bern. A man, a man!
Abb. Didst thou examine if within its breast
There yet were lodg'd some small remains of life?
Was it quite dead?
Bern. Nought in the grave is deader.
I look'd but once, yet life did never lodge
In any form so laid.—
A chilly horrour seiz'd me, and I fled.
1st Monk. And does the face seem all unknown to thee?
Bern. The face! I would not on the face have look'd
For e'en a kingdom's wealth, for all the world!
O no! the bloody neck, the bloody neck!
(*Shaking his head and shuddering with horrour. Loud knocking heard without.*)
Sist. Good mercy! who comes next?
Bern. Not far behind
I left our brother Thomas on the road;
But then he did repent him as he went,
And threaten'd to return.
2d Monk. See, here he comes.

Enter Brother Thomas, with a wild terrified look.

1st Monk. How wild he looks!
Bern. (*going up to him eagerly.*) What, hast thou seen it too?
Thom. Yes, yes! it glar'd upon me as it pass'd.
Bern. What glar'd upon thee?
(*All gathering round* Thomas, *and speaking at once.*)
O! what hast thou seen?
Thom. As, striving with the blast, I onward came,
Turning my feeble lantern from the wind,
Its light upon a dreadful visage gleam'd,
Which paus'd and look'd upon me as it pass'd.
But such a look, such wildness of despair,
Such horrour-strain'd features, never yet
Did earthly visage show. I shrunk and shudder'd.
If a damn'd spirit may to earth return,
I've seen it.
Bern. Was there any blood upon it?
Thom. Nay, as it pass'd, I did not see its form;
Nought but the horrid face.
Bern. It is the murderer.
1st Monk. What way went it?
Thom. I durst not look till I had pass'd it far.
Then turning round, upon the rising bank,
I saw, between me and the paly sky,
A dusky form, tossing and agitated.
I stopp'd to mark it; but, in truth, I found
'Twas but a sapling bending to the wind,
And so I onward hied, and look'd no more.
1st Monk. But we must look to't; we must follow it:
Our duty so commands. (*To 2d* Monk.) Will you go, brother?
(*To* Bernard.) And you, good Bernard?
Bern. If I needs must go.
1st Monk. Come, we must all go.
Abb. Heaven be with you, then!
[Exeunt Monks.
Pen. Amen! amen! Good heaven be with us all!
O what a dreadful night!
Abb. Daughters, retire; peace to the peaceful dead!
Our solemn ceremony now is finish'd.
[Exeunt.

Scene II.—A large room in the convent, very dark.

Enter the Abbess, Young Pensioner bearing a light, and several Nuns; she sets down the light on a table at the bottom of the stage, so that the room is still very gloomy.

Abb. They have been longer absent than I thought;
I fear he has escap'd them.
1st Nun. Heaven forbid!
Pen. No, no, found out foul murder ever is,
And the foul murd'rer too.
2d Nun. The good Saint Francis will direct their search;
The blood so near this holy convent shed
For threefold vengeance calls.
Abb. I hear a noise within the inner court—
They are return'd; (*listening;*) and Bernard's voice I hear:
They are return'd.
Pen. Why do I tremble so?
It is not I who ought to tremble thus.

2d Nun. I hear them at the door.

Bern. (*without.*) Open the door, I pray thee, brother Thomas;
I cannot now unhand the prisoner.

(*All speak together, shrinking back from the door, and staring upon one another.*) He is with them!

(*A folding door at the bottom of the stage is opened, and enter* Bernard, Thomas, *and the other two* Monks, *carrying lanterns in their hands, and bringing in* De Monfort. *They are likewise followed by other* Monks. *As they lead forward* De Monfort, *the light is turned away, so that he is seen obscurely; but when they come to the front of the stage, they turn the light side of their lanterns on him at once, and his face is seen in all the strengthened horrour of despair, with his hands and clothes bloody.*

(Abbess *and* Nuns *speak at once, and start back.*) Holy saints be with us!

Bern. (*to Abb.*) Behold the man of blood!

Abb. Of misery too; I cannot look upon him.

Bern. (*to Nuns.*) Nay, holy sisters, turn not thus away.
Speak to him, if, perchance, he will regard you:
For from his mouth we have no utt'rance heard,
Save one deep groan and smother'd exclamation,
When first we seiz'd him.

Abb. (*to* De Mon.) Most miserable man, how art thou thus? (*Pauses.*)
Thy tongue is silent, but those bloody hands
Do witness horrid things. What is thy name?

De Mon. (*roused, looks steadfastly at the* Abbess *for some time, then speaking in a short hurried voice.*) I have no name.

Abb. (*to* Bern.) Do it thyself; I'll speak to him no more.

Pen. O holy saints! that this should be the man
Who did against his fellow lift the stroke,
Whilst he so loudly call'd.—
Still in my ears it rings: O murder! murder!

De Mon. (*starting.*) He calls again!

Pen. No, he did call, but now his voice is still'd.
'Tis past.

De Mon. 'Tis past.

Pen. Yes, it is past! art thou not he who did it?

(De Monfort *utters a deep groan, and is supported from falling by the Monks. A noise is heard without.*)

Abb. What noise is this of heavy lumb'ring steps,
Like men who with a weighty burden come?

Bern. It is the body: I have orders given
That here it should be laid.

(*Enter men, bearing the body of* Rezenvelt, *covered with a white cloth, and set it down in the middle of the room: they then uncover it.* De Monfort *stands fixed and motionless with horrour, only that a sudden shivering seems to pass over him when they uncover the corpse. The* Abbess *and* Nuns *shrink back and retire to some distance, all the rest fixing their eyes steadfastly upon* De Monfort. *A long pause.*)

Bern. (*to* De Mon.) See'st thou that lifeless corpse, those bloody wounds?
See how he lies, who but so shortly since
A living creature was, with all the powers
Of sense, and motion, and humanity!
Oh! what a heart had he who did this deed!

1st Monk. (*looking at the body.*) How hard those teeth against the lips are press'd,
As tho' he struggled still!

2d Monk. The hands, too, clench'd: the last efforts of nature.

(De Monfort *still stands motionless. Brother* Thomas *then goes to the body, and raising up the head a little, turns it towards* De Monfort.)

Thom. Know'st thou this ghastly face?

De Mon. (*putting his hands before his face in violent perturbation.*) Oh do not! do not! Veil it from my sight!
Put me to any agony but this!

Thom. Ha! dost thou then confess the dreadful deed?
Hast thou against the laws of awful heav'n
Such horrid murder done? What fiend could tempt thee?

(*Pauses and looks steadfastly at* De Monfort.)

De Mon. I hear thy words, but do not hear their sense—
Hast thou not covered it?

Bern. (*to* Thom.) Forbear, my brother, for thou see'st right well
He is not in a state to answer thee.
Let us retire and leave him for a while.
These windows are with iron grated o'er;
He is secur'd, and other duty calls.

Thom. Then let it be.

Bern. (*to* Monks, *&c.*) Come, let us all depart.

(Exeunt Abbess *and* Nuns, *followed by the* Monks. *One* Monk *lingering a little behind.*)

De Mon. All gone! (*Perceiving the* Monk.) O stay thou here!

Monk. It must not be.

De Mon. I'll give thee gold; I'll make thee rich in gold,
If thou wilt stay e'en but a little while.

Monk. I must not, must not stay.

De Mon. I do conjure thee!

Monk. I dare not stay with thee. (*Going.*)

De Mon. And wilt thou go? (*Catching hold of him eagerly.*)
O! throw thy cloak upon this grizly form!
The unclos'd eyes do stare upon me still.
O do not leave me thus!

[Monk *covers the body, and* Exit.

De Mon. (*alone, looking at the covered body, but at a distance.*) Alone with thee! but thou art nothing now.

'Tis done, 'tis number'd with the things o'er-past;
Would, would it were to come!—
What fated end, what darkly gathering cloud
Will close on all this horrour?
O that dire madness would unloose my thoughts,
And fill my mind with wildest fantasies,
Dark, restless, terrible! aught, aught but this!
(Pauses and shudders.)
How with convulsive life he heav'd beneath me,
E'en with the death's wound gor'd! O horrid, horrid!
Methinks I feel him still.—What sound is that?
I heard a smother'd groan.—It is impossible!
(Looking steadfastly at the body.)
It moves! it moves! the cloth doth heave and swell.
It moves again! I cannot suffer this—
Whate'er it be, I will uncover it.
(Runs to the corpse, and tears off the cloth in despair.)
All still beneath.
Nought is there here but fix'd and grizly death.
How sternly fixed! Oh! those glazed eyes!
They look upon me still.
(Shrinks back with horrour.)
Come, madness! come unto me senseless death!
I cannot suffer this! Here, rocky wall,
Scatter these brains, or dull them!
(Runs furiously, and, dashing his head against the wall, falls upon the floor.)

Enter two MONKS, hastily.

1st Monk. See; wretched man, he hath destroyed himself.
2d Monk. He does but faint. Let us remove him hence.
1st Monk. We did not well to leave him here alone.
2d Monk. Come, let us bear him to the open air. [EXEUNT, *bearing out* De Monfort.

SCENE III.—BEFORE THE GATES OF THE CONVENT.

Enter JANE DE MONFORT, FREBERG, and MANUEL. As they are proceeding towards the gate, JANE stops short and shrinks back.

Freb. Ha! wherefore? has a sudden illness seiz'd thee?
Jane. No, no, my friend.—And yet I'm very faint—
I dread to enter here.
Man. Ay, so I thought:
For, when between the trees, that abbey tower
First shew'd its top, I saw your count'nance change.
But breathe a little here; I'll go before,
And make inquiry at the nearest gate.
Freb. Do so, good Manuel.
(Manuel *goes and knocks at the gate.*)
Courage, dear Madam: all may yet be well.
Rezenvelt's servant, frighten'd with the storm,
And seeing that his master join'd him not,
As by appointment, at the forest's edge,
Might be alarm'd, and give too ready ear
To an unfounded rumour.
He saw it not; he came not here himself.
Jane. *(looking eagerly to the gate, where* Manuel *talks with the Porter.)* Ha!
see, he talks with some one earnestly.
And see'st thou not that motion of his hands?
He stands like one who hears a horrid tale.
Almighty God!
(Manuel *goes into the convent.*)
He comes not back; he enters.
Freb. Bear up, my noble friend.
Jane. I will, I will! But this suspense is dreadful.
(A long pause. Manuel *re-enters from the convent, and comes forward slowly with a sad countenance.)*
Is this the face of one who bears good tidings?
O God! his face doth tell the horrid fact;
There is nought doubtful here.
Freb. How is it, Manuel?
Man. I've seen him through a crevice in his door:
It is indeed my master. *(Bursting into tears.)*
(Jane *faints, and is supported by* Freberg.—
Enter ABBESS and several NUNS from the convent, who gather about her, and apply remedies. She recovers.

1st Nun. The life returns again.
2d Nun. Yes, she revives.
Abb. *(to* Freb.) Let me entreat this noble lady's leave
To lead her in. She seems in great distress!
We would with holy kindness soothe her woe,
And do by her the deeds of christian love.
Freb. Madam, your goodness has my grateful thanks. [EXEUNT, *supporting* Jane *into the convent.*

SCENE IV.—DE MONFORT IS DISCOVERED SITTING IN A THOUGHTFUL POSTURE. HE REMAINS SO FOR SOME TIME. HIS FACE AFTERWARDS BEGINS TO APPEAR AGITATED, LIKE ONE WHOSE MIND IS HARROWED WITH THE SEVEREST THOUGHTS; THEN, STARTING FROM HIS SEAT, HE CLASPS HIS HANDS TOGETHER, AND HOLDS THEM UP TO HEAVEN.

De Mon. O that I ne'er had known the light of day!
That filmy darkness on mine eyes had hung,
And clos'd me out from the fair face of nature!
O that my mind in mental darkness pent,
Had no perception, no distinction known,
Of fair, or foul, perfection, or defect,
Nor thought conceiv'd of proud pre-eminence!
O that it had! O that I had been form'd
An idiot from the birth! a senseless changeling,

Who eats his glutton's meal with greedy haste,
Nor knows the band who feeds him.—
(*Pauses: then, in a calmer sorrowful voice.*)
What am I now? how ends the day of life?
For end it must; and terrible this gloom,
This storm of horrours that surrounds its close.
This little term of nature's agony
Will soon be o'er, and what is past is past:
But shall I then, on the dark lap of earth
Lay me to rest, in still unconsciousness,
Like senseless clod that doth no pressure feel
From wearing foot of daily passenger;
Like steeped rock o'er which the breaking waves
Bellow and foam unheard? O would I could!

Enter MANUEL, who springs forward to his master, but is checked upon perceiving De Monfort draw back and look sternly at him.

Man. My lord, my master! O my dearest master!
(De Monfort *still looks at him without speaking.*)
Nay, do not thus regard me, good my Lord!
Speak to me: am I not your faithful Manuel?

De Mon. (*in a hasty broken voice.*) Art thou alone?

Man. No, Sir, the lady Jane is on her way;
She is not far behind.

De Mon. (*tossing his arm over his head in an agony.*) This is too much! All I can bear but this!
It must not be.—Run and prevent her coming.
Say, he who is detain'd a pris'ner here
Is one to her unknown. I now am nothing.
I am a man of holy claims bereft;
Out of the pale of social kindred cast;
Nameless and horrible.—
Tell her De Monfort far from hence is gone
Into a desolate and distant land,
Ne'er to return again. Fly, tell her this;
For we must meet no more.

Enter JANE DE MONFORT, bursting into the chamber, and followed by FREBERG, ABBESS, and several NUNS.

Jane. We must! we must! My brother, O my brother!
(De Monfort *turns away his head and hides his face with his arm.* Jane *stops short, and, making a great effort, turns to* Freberg, *and the others who followed her, and with an air of dignity stretches out her hand, beckoning them to retire. All retire but* Freberg, *who seems to hesitate.*)
And thou too, Freberg: call it not unkind.
[EXIT Freberg, Jane *and* De Monfort *only remain.*

Jane. My hapless Monfort!
(De Monfort *turns round and looks sorrowfully upon her; she opens her arms to him, and he, rushing into them, hides his face upon her breast and weeps.*)

Jane. Ay, give thy sorrow vent; here may'st thou weep.

De Mon. (*in broken accents.*) Oh! this, my sister, makes me feel again
The kindness of affection.
My mind has in a dreadful storm been tost;
Horrid and dark.—I thought to weep no more.—
I've done a deed—But I am human still.

Jane. I know thy suff'rings: leave thy sorrow free:
Thou art with one who never did upbraid;
Who mourns, who loves thee still.

De Mon. Ah! say'st thou so? no, no; it should not be.
(*Shrinking from her.*) I am a foul and bloody murderer,
For such embrace unmeet: O leave me! leave me!
Disgrace and publick shame abide me now;
And all, alas! who do my kindred own,
The direful portion share.—Away, away!
Shall a disgrac'd and publick criminal
Degrade thy name, and claim affinity
To noble worth like thine?—I have no name—
I'm nothing now, not e'en to thee; depart.
(*She takes his hand, and grasping it firmly, speaks with a determined voice.*)

Jane. De Monfort, hand in hand we have enjoy'd
The playful term of infancy together;
And in the rougher path of ripen'd years
We've been each other's stay. Dark lowers our fate,
And terrible the storm that gathers o'er us;
But nothing, till that latest agony
Which severs thee from nature, shall unloose
This fix'd and sacred hold. In thy dark prison-house;
In the terrific face of armed law;
Yea, on the scaffold, if it needs must be,
I never will forsake thee.

De Mon. (*looking at her with admiration.*)
Heav'n bless thy gen'rous soul, my noble Jane!
I thought to sink beneath this load of ill,
Depress'd with infamy and open shame;
I thought to sink in abject wretchedness:
But for thy sake I'll rouse my manhood up,
And meet it bravely; no unseemly weakness,
I feel my rising strength, shall blot my end,
To clothe thy cheek with shame.

Jane. Yes, thou art noble still.

De Mon. With thee I am; who were not so with thee?
But ah! my sister, short will be the term.
Death's stroke will come, and in that state beyond,
Where things unutterable wait the soul,
New from its earthly tenement discharg'd,
We shall be sever'd far.
Far as the spotless purity of virtue
Is from the murd'rer's guilt, far shall we be.
This is the gulf of dread uncertainty
From which the soul recoils.

Jane. The God who made thee is a God of mercy;
Think upon this.

De Mon. (*shaking his head.*) No, no! this blood! this blood!

Jane. Yes, e'en the sin of blood may be forgiven,

When humble penitence hath once aton'd.
De Mon. (*eagerly.*) What, after terms of lengthen'd misery,
Imprison'd anguish of tormented spirits,
Shall I again, a renovated soul,
Into the blessed family of the good
Admittance have? Think'st thou that this may be?
Speak if thou canst: O speak me comfort here!
For dreadful fancies, like an armed host,
Have push'd me to despair. It is most horrible—
O speak of hope! if any hope there be.
(Jane *is silent, and looks sorrowfully upon him; then clasping her hands, and turning her eyes to heaven, seems to mutter a prayer.*)
De Mon. Ha! dost thou pray for me? heav'n hear thy prayer!
I fain would kneel.—Alas! I dare not do it.
Jane. Not so! all by th' Almighty Father form'd,
May in their deepest mis'ry call on him.
Come kneel with me, my brother.
(*She kneels and prays to herself; he kneels by her, and clasps his hands fervently, but speaks not. A noise of chains clanking is heard without, and they both rise.*)
De Mon. Hear'st thou that noise? They come to interrupt us.
Jane. (*moving towards a side door.*) Then let us enter here.
De Mon. (*catching hold of her with a look of horrour.*) Not there—not there—the corpse—the bloody corpse!
Jane. What, lies he there?—Unhappy Rezenvelt?
De Mon. A sudden thought has come across my mind;
How came it not before? Unhappy Rezenvelt!
Say'st thou but this?
Jane. What should I say? he was an honest man;
I still have thought him such, as such lament him.
(De Monfort *utters a deep groan.*)
What means this heavy groan?
De Mon. It hath a meaning.

Enter Abbess and Monks, with two Officers of justice carrying fetters in their hands to put upon De Monfort.

Jane. (*starting.*) What men are these?
1st Off. Lady, we are the servants of the law,
And bear with us a power, which doth constrain
To bind with fetters this our prisoner.
(*Pointing to* De Monfort.)
Jane. A stranger uncondemn'd? this cannot be.
1st Off. As yet, indeed, he is by law unjudg'd,
But is so far condemn'd by circumstance,
That law, or custom sacred held as law,
Doth fully warrant us, and it must be.
Jane. Nay, say not so; he has no power t'escape:
Distress hath bound him with a heavy chain;
There is no need of yours.
1st Off. We must perform our office.
Jane. O! do not offer this indignity!
1st Off. Is it indignity in sacred law
To bind a murderer? (*To 2d* Officer.) Come, do thy work.
Jane. Harsh are thy words, and stern thy harden'd brow;
Dark is thine eye; but all some pity have
Unto the last extreme of misery.
I do beseech thee! if thou art a man—
(*Kneeling to him.*)
(De Monfort, *roused at this, runs up to* Jane, *and raises her hastily from the ground: then stretches himself up proudly.*)
De Mon. (*to* Jane.) Stand thou erect in native dignity;
And bend to none on earth the suppliant knee,
Though cloth'd in power imperial. To my heart
It gives a feller gripe than many irons.
(*Holding out his hands.*) Here, officers of law, bind on those shackles;
And, if they are too light, bring heavier chains.
Add iron to iron; load, crush me to the ground:
Nay, heap ten thousand weight upon my breast,
For that were best of all.
(*A long pause, whilst they put irons upon him. After they are on,* Jane *looks at him sorrowfully, and lets her head sink on her breast.* De Monfort *stretches out his hand, looks at them, and then at* Jane; *crosses them over his breast, and endeavours to suppress his feelings.**)
1st Off. I have it, too, in charge to move you hence, (*To* De Monfort.)
Into another chamber more secure.
De Mon. Well, I am ready, Sir.
(*Approaching* Jane, *whom the* Abbess *is endeavouring to comfort, but to no purpose.*)
Ah! wherefore thus! most honour'd and most dear?
Shrink not at the accoutrements of ill,
Daring the thing itself.
(*Endeavouring to look cheerful.*)
Wilt thou permit me with a gyved hand?
(*She gives her hand, which he raises to his lips.*)
This was my proudest office.
[Exeunt, De Monfort *leading out* Jane.

Scene V.—An apartment in the convent, opening into another room, whose low arched door is seen in the bottom of the stage. In one corner a monk is seen kneeling.

* Should this play ever again be acted, perhaps it would be better that the curtain should drop here; since here the story may be considered as completed, and what comes after, prolongs the piece too much when our interest for the fate of De Monfort is at an end.

Enter another Monk, who, on perceiving him, stops till he rises from his knees, and then goes eagerly up to him.

1st Monk. How is the prisoner?

2d Monk. (*pointing to the door.*) He is within, and the strong hand of death
Is dealing with him.

1st Monk. How is this, good brother?
Methought he brav'd it with a manly spirit;
And led, with shackled hands, his sister forth,
Like one resolv'd to bear misfortune bravely.

2d Monk. Yes, with heroick courage, for a while
He seem'd inspir'd; but, soon depress'd again,
Remorse and dark despair o'erwhelm'd his soul:
And, from the violent working of his mind,
Some stream of life within his breast has burst;
For many a time, within a little space,
The ruddy tide has rush'd into his mouth.
God grant his pains be short!

1st Monk. How does the lady?

2d Monk. She sits and bears his head upon her lap,
Wiping the cold drops from his ghastly face
With such a look of tender wretchedness,
It wrings the heart to see her.—
How goes the night?

1st Monk. It wears, methinks, upon the midnight hour.
It is a dark and fearful night: the moon
Is wrapp'd in sable clouds: the chill blast sounds
Like dismal lamentations. Ay, who knows
What voices mix with the dark midnight winds?
Nay, as I pass'd that yawning cavern's mouth,
A whisp'ring sound, unearthly, reach'd my ear,
And o'er my head a chilly coldness crept.
Are there not wicked fiends and damned sprites,
Whom yawning charnels, and th' unfathom'd depths
Of secret darkness, at this fearful hour,
Do upwards send, to watch, unseen, around
The murd'rer's death-bed, at his fatal term,
Ready to hail with dire and horrid welcome,
Their future mate?—I do believe there are.

2d Monk. Peace, peace! a God of wisdom and of mercy,
Veils from our sight—Ha! hear that heavy groan. (*A groan heard within.*)

1st Monk. It is the dying man. (*Another groan.*)

2d Monk. God grant him rest! (*Listening at the door.*)
I hear him struggling in the gripe of death.
O piteous heaven! (*Goes from the door.*)

Enter BROTHER THOMAS from the chamber.

How now, good Brother?

Thom. Retire, my friends. O many a bed of death
With all its pangs and horrours I have seen,
But never aught like this! Retire, my friends;
The death-bell will its awful signal give,
When he has breath'd his last.
I would move hence, but I am weak and faint:
Let me a moment on thy shoulder lean.
Oh, weak and mortal man!
(*Leans on second Monk: a pause.*)

Enter BERNARD from the chamber.

2d Monk. (*to* Bern.) How is your penitent?

Bern. He is with HIM who made him; HIM, who knows
The soul of man: before whose awful presence
Th' unsceptred tyrant simple, helpless, stands
Like an unclothed babe. (*Bell tolls.*)
The dismal sound!
Retire and pray for the blood-stained soul:
May heav'n have mercy on him!
(*Bell tolls again.*) [EXEUNT.

SCENE VI.—A HALL OR LARGE ROOM IN THE CONVENT. THE BODIES OF DE MONFORT AND REZENVELT ARE DISCOVERED LAID OUT UPON A LOW TABLE OR PLATFORM, COVERED WITH BLACK. FREBERG, BERNARD, ABBESS, MONKS, AND NUNS ATTENDING.

Abb. (*to* Freb.) Here must they they lie, my Lord, until we know
Respecting this the order of the law.

Freb. And you have wisely done, my rev'rend mother.
(*Goes to the table, and looks at the bodies, but without uncovering them.*)
Unhappy men! ye, both in nature rich,
With talents and with virtues were endued.
Ye should have lov'd, yet deadly rancour came,
And in the prime and manhood of your days
Ye sleep in horrid death. O direful hate!
What shame and wretchedness his portion is,
Who, for a secret inmate, harbours thee!
And who shall call him blameless, who excites,
Ungen'rously excites, with careless scorn,
Such baleful passion in a brother's breast,
Whom heav'n commands to love? Low are ye laid:
Still all contention now.—Low are ye laid:
I lov'd you both, and mourn your hapless fall.

Abb. They were your friends, my Lord?

Freb. I lov'd them both. How does the lady Jane?

Abb. She bears misfortune with intrepid soul.
I never saw in woman bow'd with grief,
Such moving dignity.

Freb. Ay, still the same.
I've known her long: of worth most excellent;
But in the day of woe, she ever rose
Upon the mind with added majesty,
As the dark mountain more sublimely tow'rs
Mantled in clouds and storm.

Enter MANUEL and JEROME.

Man. (*pointing.*) Here, my good Jerome, here's a piteous sight.

Jer. A piteous sight! yet I will look upon him:
I'll see his face in death. Alas, alas!
I've seen him move a noble gentleman;
And when with vexing passion undisturb'd,
He look'd most graciously.
(*Lifts up in mistake the cloth from the body of* Rezenvelt, *and starts back with horrour.*)
Oh! this was the bloody work! Oh, oh! oh, oh!
That human hands could do it!
(*Drops the cloth again.*)
Man. That is the murder'd corpse; here lies De Monfort.
(*Going to uncover the other body.*)
Jer. (*turning away his head.*) No, no! I cannot look upon him now.
Man. Didst thou not come to see him?
Jer. Fy! cover him—inter him in the dark—
Let no one look upon him.
Bern. (*To* Jer.) Well dost thou shew the abhorrence nature feels
For deeds of blood, and I commend thee well.
In the most ruthless heart compassion wakes
For one, who, from the hand of fellow man,
Hath felt such cruelty.
(*Uncovering the body of* Rezenvelt.)
This is the murder'd corse:
(*Uncovering the body of* De Monfort.)
But see, I pray!
Here lies the murderer. What think'st thou here?
Look on those features, thou hast seen them oft,
With the last dreadful conflict of despair,
So fix'd in horrid strength.
See those knit brows; those hollow sunken eyes;
The sharpen'd nose, with nostrils all distent;
That writhed mouth, where yet the teeth appear,
In agony, to gnash the nether lip.
Think'st thou, less painful than the murd'rer's knife
Was such a death as this?
Ay, and how changed too those matted locks!
Jer. Merciful heaven! his hair is grisly grown,
Chang'd to white age, that was, but two days since,
Black as the raven's plume. How may this be?
Bern. Such change, from violent conflict of the mind,
Will sometimes come.
Jer. Alas, alas! most wretched!
Thou wert too good to do a cruel deed,
And so it kill'd thee. Thou hast suffer'd for it.
God rest thy soul! I needs must touch thy hand,
And bid thee long farewell.
(*Laying his hand on* De Monfort.)
Bern. Draw back, draw back; see where the lady comes.

Enter Jane De Monfort.

Freberg, *who has been for some time retired by himself to the bottom of the stage, now steps forward to lead her in, but checks himself on seeing the fixed sorrow of her countenance, and draws back respectfully.* Jane *advances to the table, and looks attentively at the covered bodies.* Manuel *points out the body of* De Monfort, *and she gives a gentle inclination of the head, to signify that she understands him. She then bends tenderly over it, without speaking.*
Man. (*to* Jane, *as she raises her head.*) Oh, madam! my good lord.
Jane. Well says thy love, my good and faithful Manuel;
But we must mourn in silence.
Man. Alas! the times that I have follow'd him!
Jane. Forbear, my faithful Manuel. For this love
Thou hast my grateful thanks; and here's my hand:
Thou hast lov'd him, and I'll remember thee.
Where'er I am; in whate'er spot of earth
I linger out the remnant of my days,
I will remember thee.
Man. Nay, by the living God! where'er you are,
There will I be. I'll prove a trusty servant:
I'll follow you, even to the world's end.
My master's gone; and I indeed am mean,
Yet will I show the strength of nobler men,
Should any dare upon your honour'd worth
To put the slightest wrong. Leave you, dear lady!
Kill me, but say not this!
(*Throwing himself at her feet.*)
Jane. (*raising him.*) Well, then! be thou my servant, and my friend.
Art thou, good Jerome, too, in kindness come?
I see thou art. How goes it with thine age?
Jer. Ah, Madam! woe and weakness dwell with age:
Would I could serve you with a young man's strength!
I'd spend my life for you.
Jane. Thanks, worthy Jerome.
O! who hath said, the wretched have no friends?
Freb. In every sensible and gen'rous breast
Affliction finds a friend; but unto thee,
Thou most exalted and most honourable,
The heart in warmest adoration bows,
And even a worship pays.
Jane. Nay, Freberg, Freberg! grieve me not, my friend.
He to whose ear my praise most welcome was,
Hears it no more; and, oh our piteous lot!
What tongue will talk of him? Alas, alas!
This more than all will bow me to the earth;
I feel my misery here.
The voice of praise was wont to name us both;
I had no greater pride.
(*Covers her face with her hands, and bursts into tears. Here they all hang about her:* Freberg *supporting her tenderly.* Manuel *embracing her knees, and old* Jerome *catching hold of her robe affectionately.* Bernard, Abbess, Monks, *and* Nuns, *likewise, gather*

round her, with looks of sympathy.)

Enter two OFFICERS of law.

1st Off. Where is the prisoner?
Into our hands he straight must be consign'd.
Bern. He is not subject now to human laws;
The prison that awaits him is the grave.
1st Off. Ha! say'st thou so? there is foul play in this.
Man. (*to* Off.) Hold thy unrighteous tongue, or hie thee hence,
Nor, in the presence of this honour'd dame,
Utter the slightest meaning of reproach.
1st Off. I am an officer on duty call'd,
And have authority to say, "How died he?"
(*Here* Jane *shakes off the weakness of grief, and repressing* Manuel, *who is about to reply to the* Officer, *steps forward with dignity.*)
Jane. Tell them, by whose authority you come,
He died that death which best becomes a man
Who is with keenest sense of conscious ill
And deep remorse assail'd, a wounded spirit:
A death that kills the noble and the brave,
And only them. He had no other wound.
1st Off. And shall I trust to this?
Jane. Do as thou wilt:
To one who can suspect my simple word
I have no more reply. Fulfil thine office.
1st Off. No, Lady, I believe your honour'd word,
And will no further search.
Jane. I thank your courtesy: thanks, thanks to all;
My rev'rend mother, and ye honour'd maids;
Ye holy men, and you, my faithful friends;
The blessing of the afflicted rest with you!
And He, who to the wretched is most piteous,
Will recompense you.—Freberg, thou art good;
Remove the body of the friend you lov'd;
'Tis Rezenvelt I mean. Take thou this charge:
'Tis meet, that with his noble ancestors
He lie entomb'd in honourable state.
And now I have a sad request to make,
Nor will these holy sisters scorn my boon:
That I, within these sacred cloister walls,
May raise a humble, nameless tomb to him,
Who, but for one dark passion, one dire deed,
Had claim'd a record of as noble worth
As e'er enrich'd the sculptur'd pedestal.
[EXEUNT.

Note.—The last three lines of the last speech are not intended to give the reader a true character of DE MONFORT, whom I have endeavoured to represent throughout the Play as, notwithstanding his other good qualities, proud, suspicious, and susceptible of envy; but only to express the partial sentiments of an affectionate sister, naturally more inclined to praise him from the misfortune into which he had fallen.

☞ The Tragedy of DE MONFORT has been brought out at Drury-Lane Theatre, adapted to the stage by Mr Kemble. I am infinitely obliged to that Gentleman for the excellent powers he has exerted, assisted by the incomparable talents of his sister, Mrs. Siddons, in endeavouring to obtain for it that publick favour, which I sincerely wish it had been found more worthy of reeivi ng.

THE ELECTION: A COMEDY.

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

MEN.

BALTIMORE, *a country gentleman, and the head of an old family fallen into decay.*
FREEMAN, *a great clothier, who has acquired by his own industry a very large fortune.*
TRUEBRIDGE, *the friend of* Baltimore.
CHARLES, *an idle young man, cousin to* Baltimore, *and brought up in his house.*
JENKISON, } *Two Attorneys.*
SERVET, }
BESCATTI, *an Italian master.*
DAVID, } *Servants to* Baltimore.
PETER, }
Voters, Mob, Boys, Jailers, &c. &c.

WOMEN.

MRS. BALTIMORE.
MRS. FREEMAN.
CHARLOTTE, *daughter to* Freeman.
GOVERNESS.
MARGERY, *an old servant of the* Baltimore *family.*
Servants, Voters, Wives, Mob, &c.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—THE OPEN MARKET-PLACE OF A SMALL COUNTRY TOWN, A CROWD OF MEN, WOMEN, AND CHILDREN, SEEN ON THE BACK GROUND; MARGERY AND COUNTRYMAN SURROUNDED WITH SEVERAL OTHERS ARE DISCOVERED TALKING ON THE FRONT OF THE STAGE.

Mar. Patron! pot-man an' you will. As long as he holds the brown jug to their heads, they'll run after him an' he were the devil. Oh! that I should live to see the heir of the ancient family of Baltimore set aside in his own borough by a nasty, paltry, nobody-knows-who of an upstart! What right has he, forsooth! to set himself up for to oppose a noble gentleman? I remember his own aunt very well; a poor industrious pains-taking woman, with scarcely a pair of shoes to her feet.

Countryman. Well, well, and what does that signify, Goody? He has covered more bare feet with new shoes since he came among us, than all the noble families in the country, let his aunt wear what shoes she would: ay, and his bounty has filled more empty bellies too, though his granum might dine on a turnip, for aught I know or care about the matter.

Mar. Don't tell me about his riches, and his bounty, and what not: will all that ever make him any thing else than the son of John Freeman the weaver? I wonder to hear you talk such nonsense, Arthur Wilkins; you that can read books and understand reason: such a fellow as that is not good enough to stand cap in hand before Mr. Baltimore.

(*The rabble come forward, huzzaing, and making a great noise, and take different sides of the stage.*)

Croud on F. side.) Huzza! huzza! Freeman for ever!

Mar. Yes, yes, to be sure: Freeman for ever! fat Sam the butcher for ever! black Dick the tinker for ever! any body is good enough for you, filthy rapscallions.

1st Mob on F. side.) Ay, scold away, old Margery! Freeman for ever! say I. Down with your proud, pennyless gentry! Freeman for ever!

Mar. Down with your rich would-be-gentry upstarts! Baltimore for ever! (*to mob on her side.*) Why don't you call out, oafs?

(*The mob on her side call out* Baltimore, *and the mob on the other,* Freeman; *but the F. side gets the better.*)

What, do you give it up so? you poor, spiritless nincumpoops! I would roar till I bursted first, before I would give it up so to such a low-lived, beggarly rabble.

2d mob on F. side.) They lack beef and porter, Margery. That makes fellows loud and hearty, I trow. Coats of arms and old pictures wont fill a body's stomach. Come over to Freeman-hall, and we'll shew you good cheer, woman. Freeman for ever!

Mar. Ha' done with your bawling, blacmoor! what care I for your good cheer? none of your porter nor your beef for me, truly!

2d mob on F. side.) No, Goody! mayhap, as you have been amongst the gentry all your life, you may prefer a cup of nice sage tea, or a little nice rue-water, or a leg of a roasted snipe, or a bit of a nice tripe dumplin.

Mar. Close your fool's mouth, oaf! or I'll cram a dumplin into it that you wont like the chewing of. Mr. Baltimore's father kept a table like a prince, when your poor beggarly candidate's father had scarcely a potatoe in his pot. But knaves like you were not admitted within his gates to see it, indeed. Better men than you, or your master either, were not good enough to take away his dirty

trenchers; and the meanest creature about his house was as well dress'd, and in as good order, as if it had been the king's court, and every day in the year had been a Sunday.

2d Mob on F. side.) So they were, Goody; I remember it very well; the very sucking pigs ran about his yard with full bottom'd wigs on, and the grey goose waddled through the dirt with a fine flounced petticoat.

Mar. Hold your fool's tongue, do! no upstart parliament-men for me! Baltimore for ever!

Croud on B. side call out) Baltimore for ever!

1*st Mob on B. side.*) Sour paste and tangled bobbins for weavers!

1*st Mob on F. side.*) Empty purses and tatter'd lace for gentlemen!

Old woman on B. side.) We'll have no strange new-comers for our member: Baltimore for me!

Old woman on F. side.) Good broth is better than good blood, say I: Freeman for me!

Little Boy on B. side.) Weaver, weaver, flap, flap!
Grin o'er your shuttle, and rap, rap!
(*acting the motion of a weaver.*)

Little Boy on F. side.) Gentleman, gentleman, proud of a word!
Stand on your tip-toes, and bow to my lord!
(*acting a gentleman.*)

Mar. Go, you little devil's imp! who teaches you to blaspheme your betters?

(*She gives the boy a box on the ear: the mob on the other side take his part: a great uproar and confusion, and exeunt both sides fighting.*)

SCENE II.—A WALK LEADING THROUGH A GROVE, AND CLOSE BY IT.

Enter MRS. BALTIMORE, as if just alighted from her carriage, followed by her MAID and PETER, carrying a box and port-folio and other things.

Mrs. Balt. But what does all this distant noise and huzzaing mean? the whole town is in commotion.

Pet. It is nothing as I know of, Ma'am, but my Master and Mr. Freeman's voters fighting with one another at the alehouse doors, to shew their good will to the candidates, as all true hearty fellows do at an election.

Mrs. B. Yes, our member is dead suddenly; I had forgot. But who are the candidates?

Pet. My master, Madam, and Mr. Freeman.

Mrs. B. Gentlemen supported by them, you mean?

Pet. No Ma'am, I mean their own two selves, for their own two selves. But I beg pardon for naming such a man as Freeman on the same day with a gentleman like my Master.

Mrs. B. Mr. Freeman, if you please, Peter; and never let me hear you name him with disrespect in my presence. Carry those things into the house: (*to the maid*) and you too, Blond; I see Mr. Baltimore.

(EXEUNT *servants.*

Enter BALTIMORE.

Balt. My dear Isabella, you are welcome home, how are you after your journey?

Mrs. B. Perfectly well; and very glad, even after so short an absence, to find myself at home again. But what is going on here? I have heard strange news just now: Peter tells me you are a candidate for the Borough, and Mr. Freeman is your rival. It is some blunder of his own, I suppose?

Balt. No, it is not.

Mrs. B. (*stepping back in surprise, and holding up her hands.*) And are you actually throwing away the last stake of your ruin'd fortune on a contested election.

Balt. I will sell every acre of land in my possession, rather than see that man sit in parliament for the borough of Westown.

Mrs. B. And why should not he as well as another? The declining fortunes of your family have long made you give up every idea of the kind for yourself: of what consequence, then, can it possibly be to you? I know very well, my dear Baltimore, it is not a pleasant thing for the representative of an old family declined in fortune, to see a rich obscure stranger buy up all the land on every side, and set himself down like a petty prince in his neighbourhood. But if he had not done it, some other most likely would; and what should we have gain'd by the change?

Balt. O! any other than himself I could have suffer'd.

Mrs. B. you amaze me. He has some disagreeable follies, I confess, but he is friendly and liberal.

Balt. Yes, yes, he affects patronage and publick spirit: he is ostentatious to an absurdity.

Mrs. B. Well then, don't disturb yourself about it. If he is so, people will only laugh at him.

Balt. O! hang them, but they wont laugh! I have seen the day, when, if a man made himself ridiculous, the world would laugh at him. But now, by heaven, every thing that is mean, disgusting, and absurd, pleases them but so much the better! If they would but laugh at him, I should be content.

Mrs. B. My dear Baltimore! curb this strange fancy that has taken such a strong hold of your mind, and be reasonable.

Balt. I can be reasonable enough. I can see as well as you do that it is nonsense to disturb myself about this man; and when he is absent I can resolve to endure him: but whenever I see him again, there is something in his full satisfied face; in the tones of his voice; ay, in the very gait and shape of his legs, that is insufferable to me.

Mrs. B. Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!

Balt. What makes you laugh, Madam?

Mrs. B. Indeed I have more cause to cry! yet I could not help laughing when you talk'd of his gait and his legs: for people, you must know, have taken it into their heads that there is a resemblance between you and him: I

have, myself, in twilight, sometimes mistaken the one for the other.

Balt. It must have been in midnight, I think. People have taken it into their heads! blind idiots! I could kick my own shins if I thought they had the smallest resemblance to his.

Mrs. B. Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!

Balt. And this is matter of amusement for you, Ma'am? I abhor laughing.

Mrs. B. Pray, pray forgive me! This is both ludicrous and distressing. I knew that you disliked this man from the first day he settled in your neighbourhood, and that, during two years acquaintance, your aversion has been daily increasing; but I had no idea of the extravagant height to which it has now arrived.

Balt. Would I had sold every foot of my lands, and settled in the lone wilds of America, ere this man came, to be the swoln possessor of my forefathers lands; their last remaining son, now cramp'd and elbow'd round, in one small corner of their once wide and extensive domains! Oh! I shall never forget what I felt, when, with that familiar and disgusting affability, he first held out to me his damned palm, and hail'd me as a neighbour. (*striding up and down the stage.*) Ay, by my soul, he pretends to be affable!

Mrs. B. You feel those things too keenly.

Balt. A stock or a stone would feel it. He has opposed me in every contest, from the election of a member of parliament down to the choosing of a parish clerk; and yet, damn him! he will never give me a fair occasion of quarelling with him, for then I should be happier. (*striding up and down again.*) Hang it! it was not worth a pinch of snuff to me, whether the high road went on one side of my field or the other; but only that I saw he was resolved to oppose me in it, and I would have died rather than have yielded to him.

Mrs. B. Are you sure, Baltimore, that your own behaviour has not provoked him to that opposition?

Balt. (*striding up and down as he speaks.*) He has extended his insolent liberalities over the whole country round. The very bantlings lisp his name as they sit on their little stools in the sun.

Mrs. B. My dear friend!

Balt. He has built two new towers to his house; and it rears up its castled head amongst the woods, as if its master were the lord and chieftain of the whole surrounding country.

Mrs. B. And has this power to offend you?

Balt. No, no; let him pile up his house to the clouds, if he will! I can bear all this patiently: it is his indelicate and nauseous civility that drives me mad. He goggles and he smiles; he draws back his full watery lip like a toad. (*making a mouth of disgust.*) Then he spreads out his nail-bitten fingers as he speaks —hah!

Mrs. B. And what great harm does all this do you?

Balt. What harm? it makes my very flesh creep, like the wrigglings of a horse-leech or a maggot. It is an abomination beyond all endurance!

Mrs. B. The strange fancies you take in regard to every thing this poor man does, are to me astonishing.

Balt. (*Stopping short, and looking fixedly on her.*) Are to you astonishing? I doubt it not: I was a fool to expect that a wife so many years younger than myself would have any sympathy with my feelings.

Mrs. B. Baltimore! you wrong me, unkindly. —But his daughter comes: she will over hear us.

Balt. What brings that affected fool here? She is always coming here. It is an excrescence from the toad's back: the sight of her is an offence to me.

Enter CHARLOTTE, with an affected air of great delicacy.

Char. How do you do, my dear Mrs. Baltimore? I am quite charm'd to see you. (*curtseys affectedly to Balt.*)

Mrs. B. I thank you, my dear, you are early abroad this morning.

Char. O! I am almost kill'd with fatigue; but I saw your carriage at the gate, and I could not deny myself the pleasure of inquiring how you do. The heat overcomes one so much in this weather: it is enough to make one faint: it is really horrid. (*speaking in a faint soft voice, and fanning herself affectedly.*)

Mrs. B. It does not affect me.

Char. No! O you are not so robust, I am sure.

Enter a little COUNTRY GIRL, trailing a great piece of muslin after her.

Girl. (*to* Char.) Here, Miss; here is a piece of your petticoat that you left on the bushes, as you scrambled over the hedge to look at the bird's nest yonder.

Char. (*in confusion.*) O la! the briars will catch hold of one so, as one goes along. Give it me, give it me. (*takes the muslin and crams it hastily into her pocket.*) This weather makes one go by the side of ditches, and amongst bushes, and any where for a little shade.

Balt. Tadpoles love ditches in all weathers. [EXIT.

Char. (*looking after him strangely for a moment or two, and then skipping lightly up to* Mrs. B. *and taking her kindly by the hand.*) Thank heaven he's gone! I stand more in awe of him, than my mother and my governess, and all the whole pack of masters that ever came about the house. If there was not a certain look about him now and then, that puts me in mind of my father, I should take a downright aversion to him. O! I beg pardon! I mean I should not like him very well, even tho' he is your husband. But was it not provoking in that little chit to follow me with those rags in her hand?

Mrs. B. I suppose we shall have a glove or a garter coming after you bye-and-bye.

Char. O they may bring what they please now!—Well, How d'ye do? how d'ye do? how d'ye do? (*taking* Mrs. B. *by the hand, and skipping round her joyfully.*)

Mrs. B. Very well, my good little Charlotte.

Char. I am delighted to see you return'd. Ah, don't you remember how good you were to me, when I was a little urchin at Mrs. Highman's school? and how I used to stand by your side when you dress'd, and count over the pins in your pincushion?

Mrs. B. I remember it very well.

Char. But how comes it that we meet so seldom? you never come to see us now, and I dare not come to you so often as I wish, for Mr. Baltimore looks at me so sternly. Let papa and him contend with one another as they please; what have we to do with their plaguy election? O if we were but together! we could work and talk to one another all day long, and it would be so pleasant!

Mrs. B. Indeed, my dear Charlotte, I wish I could have you frequently with me; but I hope you have many pleasant employments at home.

Char. Ah, but I have not tho'. I am tired to death of music, and drawing, and Italian, and German, and geography, and astronomy, and washes to make my hands white. (*shaking her head piteously.*) But what does it signify fretting? I know I must be an accomplish'd woman; I know it very well.

Mrs. B. (*smiling.*) Don't you like to be occupied?

Char. O yes: it is not that I am a lazy girl. If they would plague me no more with my masters, but give me some plain pocket-handkerchiefs to hem, I would sit upon the footstool all day, and sing like a linnet.

Mrs. B. My dear girl, and so there must be things in this mix'd world to keep even thy careless breast from being as blithe as a linnet. But you were going home · I'll walk a little way with you.

Char. I thank you (*looking off the stage.*) Is not that Charles at a distance? I dare say, now, he has been a fishing, or looking after coveys of partridges, or loit'ring about the horse-dealers. I hope he did not see me get over the hedge tho'.

Mrs. B. Alas, poor Charles! I wish he had more useful occupations. It is a sad thing for a young man to be hanging about idle.

Char. So my papa says: and, do you know, I believe he had it in his head to get some appointment for him when this election came in the way. Shall I put him in mind of it?

Mrs. B. No, no, my dear Charlotte, that must not be. Shall we walk?

Char. (*Scampering off.*) Stop a little, pray. [Exit.

Mrs. B. Where is she gone to now?

Char. (*returning with something in her lap.*) Only to fetch my two black kittens. I bought them from a boy, as I went along, to save them from drowning. I could not curtsey to Mr. Baltimore, you know, with kittens in my lap, so I dropp'd them slyly under the hedge as I enter'd; for this fellow with the white spot on his nose makes a noise like a little devil.

(*They go arm in arm to the side of the stage to go out, when* Mrs. B. *looking behind her stops short.*)

Mrs. B. No, I must not walk farther with you just now: I see Mr. Truebridge coming this way, and I wish to speak to him. Good morning, my dear Charlotte.

[Exit Charlotte.

Enter Truebridge.

You are hurrying away very fast; I did not know you were here.

True. I have been in the library writing a letter, which I ought to have done before I left my own house. I am going from home for a few days, and I came to see Baltimore before I set out.

Mrs. B. You are always going from home. I am verry sorry you are going at this time, when your presence here might have been so useful. You might have persuaded Baltimore, perhaps, to give up this foolish contest with so rich a competitor as Freeman.

True. No, it is better, perhaps, to let them fight it out. We should only have separated them, like two game-cocks, who are sure to be at it again, beak and spurs, with more fury than ever.

Re-enter Baltimore.

Balt. (*to* True.) You have forgot your letter. A pleasant journey to you!

(*gives him a letter.*)

True. Farewell for a few days! I hope to learn, on my return, that you have carried on this contest with temper and liberality, since you will engage in it.

Balt. Why you know, Truebridge, I am compell'd to engage in it.

True. O certainly, and by very weighty reasons too! A man may injure in a hundred different ways and provoke no hostile return; but, when added to some petty offences, he varies his voice and gesture, wears his coat and doublet, nay, picks his very teeth in a manner that is irksome to us, what mortal is there, pagan or believer, that can refrain from setting himself in array against him?

Balt. Well, well! give yourself no trouble. I'll keep my temper; I'll do every thing calmly and reasonably.

True. Do so; I shan't return, probably, till the poll is closed. I have told you my reasons for taking no part in the business; and let the new member be who he will, I am resolved to shake hands cordially with him. It won't do for one who has honours and pensions in view, to quarrel with great men. Good bye to you!—Madam, all success to your wishes. [Exit.

Balt. Ask favours of such a creature as

Freeman! He speaks it but in jest. Yet if I did not know him to be one of the most independent men in the world, I should be tempted to believe that he too had become sophisticated.

Mrs. B. Ah, do not torment yourself with suspicions! I am afraid it is a disposition that has been growing upon you of late.

Balt. No, madam; it is upon you this disposition has been growing. Whenever I am in the company of that—I will not name him—I have of late observed that your eyes are bent upon me perpetually. I hate to be look'd at when I am in that man's company.

[Exeunt.

ACT II.

Scene I.—A room in Freeman's house; a table with drawings, &c. scattered upon it, in one corner, and a writing table near the front of the stage. Mrs. Freeman is discovered writing.

Enter Charlotte and her Governess.

Mrs. F. (*raising her head.*) Come here, Miss Freeman: that gown sits with no grace in the world (*turning* Char. *round.*) No, it is not at all what I intended: I shall have it taken to pieces again.) (*To the* Gov.) Was she in the stocks this morning?

Gov. Yes, Madam.

Mrs. F. From her manner of holding her head one would scarcely believe it. Go to your drawing, and finish it if you can before Mr. Bescatti comes.

(Charlotte *sits down unwillingly to the drawing table; the* Governess *takes her work and sits by her; and* Mrs. Freeman *sits down again to write.*)

Enter Mr. Bescatti.

Mrs. F. O Bescatti! you are just the very person I want. I have put a quotation from one of your Italian poets, expressive of the charms of friendship, into the letter I am writing to my dear, amiable, Mrs. Syllabub; and as I know she shews all the letters she receives from her friends, I would not have a fault in it for the world. Look at it, pray! Will it do?

(*giving him the letter with an air of self satisfaction.*)

Bes. (*shaking his head.*) No, Madam; I must be free to say, dat it won't do: de two first ords are wrong, and de two last ords are not right.

Mrs. F. (*colouring and bridling up.*) Why there are but four words of it altogether, Mr. Bescatti.

Bes. Yes, Madam; der you be very right; der you be under no mistake at all; der be just four ords in it, neider more nor less.

Mrs. F. Well, well, pray correct it for me! I suppose I was thinking of something else when I wrote it.

Bes. (*after correcting the letter.*) It is done, Madam. I hope de young lady will soon finish her drawing, dat I may have de honour to propose my little instruction.

Char. (*rising from the table.*) I can finish it to-morrow.

Mrs. F. Shew Mr. Bescatti your two last drawings (*Char. shews him her drawings.*) Every one from your country is fond of this delightful art. How do you like this piece?

Bes. It be very agreeable.

Gov. (*looking over his shoulder.*) O beautiful, charming! de most pretty of de world!

Mrs. F. There is such a fine glow in the colouring! so much spirit in the whole.

Bes. (*tardily.*) Yes.

Mrs. F. And so much boldness in the design.

Bes. (*tardily.*) Yes.

Mrs. F. And the cattle in that landscape are so spirited and so correct.

Bes. O dey be de very pretty sheep, indeed.

Mrs. F. Why, those are cows, Mr. Bescatti—those are cows.

Bes. O, Madam, I make no doubt dat in reality dey are cows, alto in appearance dey are de sheep.

Mrs. F. (*shewing him another piece.*) He will understand this better. The subject is so prettily imagined! a boy with an apple in his hand: such pleasing simplicity! look at those lights and shades: her master himself says it is touched with the hand of an artist.

Bes. Yes, he be a very pretty fellow—and a very happy one too: he has got one apple in his hand, and anoder in his mout.

Mrs. F. Another in his mouth! why that is the round swelling of his cheek, Mr. Bescatti. But look at his head (*impatiently as he looks at the wrong one.*) No, no, this one.

Bes. O dat one—dat has one side of the face white and t'oder black!

Gov. O beautiful, excellent!—all dat der is of pretty—all dat der is of—of de most pretty!

Mrs. F. There is so much effect in it; so much force and distinctness.

Bes. Yes, der be good contrast; nobody will mistake de one side of de face for de oder.

Enter Servant.

Ser. Every thing in the next room is set out, Ma'am—Have you any orders?

Mrs. F. Don't trouble me about it: I'll look at it by and by, if I have nothing better to do. (Exit Ser.)—Miss Freeman, there is no time to lose; Bescatti and you must be busy, for I expect Mr. Tweedle this morning, with a new song in his pocket.

Enter a Servant hastily.

Ser. All the voters are come, Ma'am, and, my master says we must open the great room immediately.

(*Opens folding-doors at the bottom of the stage, and discovers a large room with a long table set out, plentifully covered with cold meats, &c. &c.*

Mrs. F. What could possess the creatures to come so early? If I am to have the whole morning of it, I shall be dead before it is over. Heigh ho! here they are.

(*Enter a great number of voters with their wives and daughters, and* Freeman *shewing them in himself.*)

Free. with a very affable smiling countenance.) Come in, ladies and gentlemen; come in, my very good neighbours; my wife will be proud to see you. (*presents them to Mrs.* Freeman, *who receives them with affected condescension; whilst* Charlotte *draws herself up by her mother's side, and curtseys to them in the same affected manner.*)—This is my very good friend Mr. Ginger, my dear; and this is worthy Mr. Fudge.—But where is your wife, Mr. Fudge? we are near neighbours, you know, and I see no reason why your good woman and mine should not be better acquainted.

Mr. Fudge. She is standing close by you, Sir.

Free. O, I beg pardon, my dear Madam! I did not know you. (*to Mrs. Fudge.*)—My dear, this is Mrs. Fudge. (*presenting her to Mrs. F.*)—But my good Mr. Hassock, why have not you brought your pretty daughter with you?

Mr. Hassock. So I have, your honour; this be she. (*pointing to his daughter.*)

Free. She must give me her hand: I have a girl of my own too, you see; but she does not hold up her head so well as this young lady.

More People still coming in.

Ha! welcome, my good friends! welcome, my good neighbour Huskins, and you too, my good Mrs. Huskins!——Ha, Mr. Grub! you do me honour. How do the soap-works go on? you will soon be the richest man in the country, though you do spare me a morning now and then.

Mr. Grub. (*conceitedly.*) Aye, picking up a little in my poor way, just to keep the pot boiling. (*Going up to Mrs.* Freeman, *and wiping his face.*) Madam, I make bold, as the fashion goes on them there occasions.

(*Gives her a salute with a good loud smack, whilst she shrinks back disconcerted, and* Bescatti *and the* Governess *shrug up their shoulders, and* Charlotte *skulks behind their backs frightened.*)

Mr. Fudge. (*spitting out his chew of tobacco and wiping his mouth.*) As the fashion goes round, Madam—

Free. (*preventing him as he is going up to* Mrs. F.) No, no, my good neighbours: this is too much ceremony amongst friends. Let us go into the next room, and see if there is any thing to eat: I dare say there is some cold meat and cucumber for us. Let me have the honour, Mrs. Fudge. (*They all go into the next room and seat themselves round the table.*)

Re-enter Freeman in a great bustle.

More chairs and more covers, here! Thomas! Barnaby! Jenkins! (*the servants run up and down carrying things across the stage. Enter more people.*) Ha! welcome—welcome, my good friends! we were just looking for you. Go into the next room, and try if you can find any thing you like.

Voter. O, Sir, never fear but we shall find plenty of good victuals.

[Exeunt *into the next room.*
Manet Charlotte, *who comes forward.*

Char. La, how I should like to be a queen, and stand in my robes, and have all the people introduced to me! for then they would kiss no more than my hand, which I should hold out so. No, no; it should be so. (*stretching out her hand whilst* Charles Baltimore, *entering behind and overhearing her, takes and kisses it with a ludicrous bending of the knee.*)

Charles. And which should be kissed so?

Char. (*affectedly.*) You are always so silly, Mr. Charles Baltimore.

Charles. Are you holding court here for all those good folks? I thought there was no harm in looking in upon you, though I do belong to the other side. (*peeping.*) Faith they are busy enough! mercy on us, what a clattering of trenchers! How do you like them?

Char. Oh they are such savages; I'm sure if I had not put lavender on my pocket handkerchief, like Mama, I should have fainted away.

Charles. How can you talk of fainting with cheeks like two cabbage roses?

Char. Cabbage roses!

Charles. No, no—pest take it!—I mean the pretty, delicate damask rose.

Char. La, now you are flattering me!

Charles. I am not, indeed, Charlotte! you have the prettiest—(*peeping at the other room and stopping short.*)

Char. (*eagerly.*) I have the prettiest what?

Charles. Is that a venison pasty they have got yonder?

Char. Poo, never mind!—I have the prettiest what?

Charles. Yes, I mean the most beautiful (*peeping again.*) By my faith and so it is a venison pasty, and a monstrous good smell it has! [Exit *hastily into the eating room.*

Char. (*looking after him.*) What a nasty creature he is! he has no more sense than one of our pointers; he's always running after a good smell. [Exit.

Scene II.—An open lane near a country town.

Enter Baltimore, who passes half way across the stage, and then stopping suddenly, shrinks back.

Balt. Ha, it is him!—I'll turn and go another way. (*Turns hastily back again, and then*

stops short.) No, no, he sha'n't see me avoiding him. I'll follow Truebridge's advice, and be civil to him.—

Enter FREEMAN bowing with stiff civility.

Good morning, Sir.

Free. And the same to you, Mr. Baltimore: how does your Lady do?

Balt. And your amiable lady, Mr. Freeman? she is a great scholar, I hear.

Free. (*with his face brightened up.*) You are very good to say so; she does indeed know some few things pretty well; and though we are rivals for the present, why shouldn't we act liberally and speak handsomely of one another at the same time? Does Mrs. Baltimore like pine-apples as well as she used to do?

Balt. (*shrinking back.*) No, she dislikes them very much.

Free. Don't say so now! I believe you don't like me to send them to you; but if you would just send over for them yourself when she wants them, I have mountains of them at her service.

Balt. (*with a contemptuous smile.*) Shall I send a tumbrel for them to-morrow morning? (Free. *draws back piqued.*) But you are liberal to every body, Mr. Freeman. I hope you and your friends have got over the fatigues of your morning feast? You were at it by times, I hear.

Free. Yes, we have been busy in the eating and drinking way, to be sure. I don't make speeches to them, and fill their heads with fine oratory; I give them from my plain stores what they like better, Mr. Baltimore.

Balt. And what you can spare better, Mr. Freeman. It is fortunate for both parties, that your stores are more applicable to the stomach than the head.

Free. It is better at least, than flattering them up with advertisements in the newspapers, about their great dignity and antiquity, &c. I don't spend my money in feeding other people's vanity.

Balt. No, certainly, Sir; charity begins at home; and your own has, thank God! a very good appetite.

Free. Pamper'd vanity is a better thing, perhaps, than starved pride. Good morning, Sir. [EXIT.

Balt. (*looking after him.*) See how consequentially he walks now, shaking his long coat skirts with that abominable swing! I should detest my own brother if he swung himself about after that manner.—Resemblance to him do they say! I could lock myself up in a cell, if I thought so, and belabour my own shoulders with a cat-o'-nine tails.

Enter PETER with one of his idle companions, and starts back upon seeing BALTIMORE.

Pet. (*aside to his* Com.) Pest take it! a body can never be a little comfortable in a sly way, but there is always some cross luck happens to him. Yonder is my master, and he thinks I am half a dozen miles off with a letter that he gave me to 'Squire Houndly. Stand before me, man; perhaps he'll go past. (*skulking behind his* Com.)

Balt. (*seeing him.*) What, you careless rascal, are you here still, when I told you the letter was of consequence to me? To have this stick broke over your head is less than you deserve: where have you been, sirrah! (*Holding up his stick in a threatening manner.*)

Pet. O Lord! your honour, if you should beat me like stock-fish I must e'en tell you the truth: for as I passed by the cat and bagpipes a little while ago, I could not help just setting my face in at the door to see what they were all about; and there I found such a jolly company of 'Squire Freeman's voters, sitting round a bowl of punch, drinking his liquors and laughing at his grandeur, and making such a mockery of it, that I could not help staying to make a little merry with them myself.

Balt. (*lowering his stick.*) Art thou sure that they laughed at him?—In his own inn, and over his own liquor?

Pet. Ay, to be sure, your honour: what do they care for that? When he orders a hogshead of ale for them out of his own cellar, they call it a pack of lamb's wool from the wool chamber. Don't they, neighbour? (*tipping the wink to his Companion.*)

Com. To be sure they do.

Balt. Ha, ha, ha! ungrateful merry varlets!—Well, well! get thee along, and be more expeditious with my letters another time. (*to himself as he goes out.*) Ha, ha! a good name for his ale truly. [EXIT.

Pet. I wonder he did not give me a little money now, for such a story as this. Howsomever, it has saved my head from being broke.

Com. And that, I think is fully as much as it is worth. I wonder you an't ashamed to behave with so little respect to a gentleman and your own master.

Pet. Fiddle faddle with all that! do you think one gets on the blind side of a man to treat him with respect? When I first came to live with Mr. Baltimore, I must say, I was woundily afraid of his honour, but I know how to manage him now well enough.

Com. I think thou dost, indeed. Who would have thought it, that had seen what a bumkin he took thee from the plough's tail, but a twelvemonth ago, because he could not afford to hire any more fine trained servants to wait upon him?

Pet. Nay, I wa'n't such a simpleton as you took me for neither. I was once before that very intimate, in my fashion, with an old 'Squire of the North Country, who was in love with his grand-daughter's dairy-maid. I warrant you I know well enough how to deal with any body that has got any of them strange fancies working within them; for as great a bumpkin as you may take me to be; and if you don't see me, ere long time goes by, make a good penny of it too, I'll give

you leave to call me a noodle. Come away to the Blue-Posts again, and have another glass, man. [Exeunt.

Scene III.—Freeman's library fitted up expensively with fine showy books and book-cases, &c. &c.

Enter Freeman and Mrs. Freeman, speaking as they enter.

Free. They sh'a'nt come again, then, since it displeases you; but they all went away in such good humour, it did my heart good to see them.

Mrs. F. Oh the Goths and the Huns! I believe the smell of their nauseous tobacco will never leave my nostrils. You don't know what I have suffered to oblige you. To any body of delicacy and refinement, it was shocking. I shall be nervous and languid for a month. But I don't complain. You know I do every thing cheerfully that can promote your interest. Oh! I am quite overcome. (*sits down languidly.*)

Free. Indeed, my dear, I know you never complain, and I am sorry I have imposed such a task upon your goodness. But the adversary gains ground upon us, and if I do not exert myself, the ancient interest of the Baltimores—the old prejudice of family, may still carry the day.

Mrs. F. (*starting up eagerly and throwing aside her assumed languor.*) That it sha'nt do, if gold and activity can prevent it! Old prejudice of family! Who has a better right than yourself to serve for the borough of Westown?

Free. So you say, my dear; and you are generally in the right. But I don't know: I don't feel as if I did altogether right in opposing Mr. Baltimore, in his own person, in the very spot where his family has so long presided. If he did not provoke me—

Mrs. F. What, have you not got over these scruples yet? Has not all the rancorous opposition you have met with from him wound you up to a higher pitch than this, Mr. Freeman? It has carried you thro' with many petty struggles against his proud will already, and would you let him get the better of you now?

Free. (*thoughtfully.*) I could have wished to have lived in peace with him.

Mrs. F. Yes, if he would have suffered you

Free. Ay, indeed, if he would have suffered me. (*musing for some time.*) Well, it is very extraordinary this dislike which he seems to have taken to me; it is inexplicable! I came into his neighbourhood with the strongest desire to be upon good terms with, nay to be upon the most friendly and familiar footing with him; yet he very soon opposed me in every thing. (*walking up and down and then stopping short.*) I asked him to dine with me almost every day, just as one would ask their oldest and most intimate acquaintance; and he knew very well I expected no entertainments in return, which would have been a foolish expense in his situation, for I took care in the handsomest manner to let him understand as much.

Mrs. F. Well, well, never trouble your head about that now, but think how you may be revenged upon him.

Free. Tho' his fortune was reduced, and I in possession of almost all the estates of the Baltimores, of more land, indeed, than they ever possessed, I was always at pains to assure him that I respected him as much as the richest man in the country; and yet, I cannot understand it, the more friendly and familiar I was with him, the more visibly his aversion to me increased. It is past all comprehension!

Mrs. F. Don't trouble yourself about that now.

Free. I'm sure I was ready upon every occasion to offer him my very best advice, and, after the large fortune I have acquired, I may be well supposed to be no novice in many things.

Mrs. F. O, he has no sense of obligations.

Free. Ay, and knowing how narrow his income is in respect to the style of living he has been accustomed to; when company came upon him unexpectedly, have I not sent and offered him every thing in my house, even to the best wines in my cellars, which he has pettishly and absurdly refused?

Mrs. F. O, he has no gratitude in him!

Free. If I had been distant, and stood upon the reserve with him, there might have been some cause. Well, it is altogether inexplicable!

Mrs. F. I'm sure it is not worth while to think so much about it.

Free. Ah, but I can't help thinking! Have I not made the ground round his house, as well as my own, look like a well-weeded garden? I have cut down the old gloomy trees; and where he used to see nothing from his windows but a parcel of old knotted oaks shaking themselves in the wind, he now looks upon two hundred rood of the best hot-walls in the North of England, besides two new summer-houses and a green-house.

Mrs. F. O, he has no taste!

Free. The stream which I found running thro' the woods, as shaggy and as wild as if it had been in a desert island, and the foot of man never marked upon its banks, I have straightened, and levelled, and dressed, till the sides of it are as nice as a bowling-green.

Mrs. F. He has no more taste than a savage; that's certain. However, you must allow that he wants some advantages, which you possess: his wife is a woman of no refinement.

Free. I don't know what you mean by refinement: She don't sing Italian and play upon the harp, I believe; but she is a very civil, obliging, good, reasonable woman.

Mrs. F. (*contemptuously.*) Yes, she is a very civil, obliging, good, reasonable woman. I wonder how some mothers can neglect the

education of their children so! If she had been my daughter, I should have made a very different thing of her, indeed.

Free. I doubt nothing, my dear, of your good instructions and example. But here comes Jenkinson.

Enter JENKINSON.

How now, Jenkinson? things go on prosperously, I hope.

Jen. Sir, I am concerned—or, indeed, sorry—that is to say, I wish I could have the satisfaction to say that they do.

Free. What say you? sorry and satisfied? You are a smooth spoken man, Mr. Jenkinson; but tell me the worst at once. I thought I had been pretty sure of it, as the poll stood this morning.

Jen. It would have given me great pleasure, Sir, to have confirmed that opinion; but unfortunately for you, and unpleasantly for myself—

Free. Tut, tut, speak faster, man! What is it?

Jen. An old gentleman from Ensford, who formerly received favours from Mrs. Baltimore's father, has come many a mile across the country, out of pure good will, to vote for him, with ten or twelve distant voters at his heels; and this, I am free to confess, is a thing that was never taken into our calculation.

Free. That was very wrong tho': we should have taken every thing into our calculation. Shall I lose it, think you? I would rather lose ten thousand pounds.

Mrs. F. Yes, Mr. Freeman, that is spoken like yourself.

Jen. A smaller sum than that, I am almost sure—that is to say, I think I may have the boldness to promise, would secure it to you.

Free. How so?

Jen. Mr. Baltimore, you know, has many unpleasant claims upon him.

Free. Debts, you mean: but what of that?

Jen. Only that I can venture to assure you, many of his creditors would have the greatest pleasure in life in obliging me. And when you have bought up their claims, it will be a very simple matter just to have him laid fast for a little while. The disgrace of that situation will effectually prevent the last days of the poll from preponderating in his favour. It is the easiest thing in the world.

Free. (*shrinking back from him.*) Is that your scheme? O fie, fie! the rudest tongued lout in the parish would have blushed to propose it.

Mrs. F. If there should be no other alternative?

Free. Let me lose it then! To be a member of Parliament, and not an honest man! O fie, fie, fie!

(*walking up and down, much disturbed.*)

Jen. To be sure—indeed it must be confessed, gentlemen have different opinions on these subjects; and I am free to confess, that I have great pleasure, upon this occasion, in submitting to your better judgment. And now, Sir, as I am sorry to be under the necessity of hurrying away from you upon an affair of some consequence to myself, will you have the goodness to indulge me with a few moments' attention, just whilst I mention to you what I have done in regard to Southerndown church-yard?

Free. Well, it is my duty to attend to that. Have you ordered a handsome monument to be put up to my father's memory? Ay, to the memory of John Freeman, the weaver. They reproach me with being the son of a mechanic; but I will shew them that I am not ashamed of my origin. Ay, every soul of them shall read it, if they please, "erected to his memory by his dutiful son," &c.

Jen. Yes, Sir, I have ordered a proper stone, with a neat plain tablet of marble.

Free. A plain tablet of marble! that is not what I meant. I'll have it a large and a handsome thing, with angels, and trumpets, and deaths' heads upon it, and every thing that a good handsome monument ought to have. Do you think I have made a fortune like a prince to have my father's tombstone put off with a neat plain tablet?

Mrs. F. Now, my dear, you must allow me to know rather more in matters of taste than yourself; and I assure you a plain tablet is the genteelest and handsomest thing that can be put upon it.

Free. Is it?

Mrs. F. Indeed is it. And as for the inscription about his dutiful son and all that, I think it would be more respectful to have it put into Latin.

Free. Very well; if it is but handsome enough, I don't care; so pray, Jenkinson, write again, and desire them to put a larger tablet, and to get the Curate to make the inscription, with as much Latin in it as he can conveniently put together. I should be glad, likewise, if you would write to the Vicar of Blackmorton to send me the register of my baptism: I shall want it by and by, on account of some family affairs.

Jen. I shall have the greatest pleasure in obeying your commands. Good day! [EXIT.

Free. Where is the state of the poll, and the list of the out-standing voters?

Mrs. F. Come to my dressing-room, and I'll shew you exactly how every thing stands. You won't surely give up your point for a little—

Free. What do you mean to say?

Mrs. F. Nothing—nothing at all. [EXEUNT.

SCENE III.—BALTIMORE'S HOUSE.

Enter BALTIMORE, followed by DAVID, and speaking as he enters.

Balt. And so the crowd gave three cheers when good old Humphries tottered up to the hustings to give his vote, as he declared, for the grandson of his old benefactor, Mr. Legender Baltimore? I should have liked to have seen it.

Dav. O, your honour, they gave three such hearty cheers! and old goody Robson clapped her poor withered hands till the tears run over her eyes.

Balt. Did she so? She shall be remembered for this! I saw her little grandson running about the other day barefooted—he shall run about barefooted no longer.—And so my friends begin to wear a bolder face upon it?

Dav. Yes, Sir, they begin to look main pert upon it now.

Balt. Well, David, and do thou look pert upon it too. There's something for thee. (*Gives him money. A noise of laughing heard without.*) Who is that without? is it not Peter's voice? Ho, Peter!

Enter Peter, followed by Nat.

What were you laughing at there?

Pet. (*with a broad grin*) Only, Sir, at Squire Freeman, he, he, he! who was riding up the Backlane, a little while ago, on his new crop-eared hunter, as fast as he could canter, with all the skirts of his coat flapping about him, for all the world like a clucking hen upon a sow's back, he, he, he!

Balt. (*with his face brightening*) Thou art pleasant, Peter; and what then?

Pet. When just turning the corner, your honour, as it might be so, my mother's brown calf, bless its snout! I shall love it for it as long as I live, set its face through the hedge, and said "Mow!"

Balt. (*eagerly.*) And he fell, did he?

Pet. O Lord, yes, your honour! into a good soft bed of all the rotten garbage of the village.

Balt. And you saw this, did you?

Pet. O yes, your honour, as plain as the nose on my face.

Balt. Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha! and you really saw it?

David. (*aside to* Nat.) I wonder my master can demean himself so as to listen to that knave's tales: I'm sure he was proud enough once.

Balt. (*still laughing.*) You really saw it?

Pet. Ay, your honour, and many more than me saw it. Didn't they, Nat?

Balt. And there were a number of people to look at him too?

Pet. Oh! your honour, all the rag tag of the parish were grinning at him. Wa'nt they, Nat?

Balt. Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha! this is excellent! ha, ha, ha! He would shake himself but ruefully before them (*still laughing violently.*)

Pet. Ay, Sir, he shook the wet straws and the withered turnip-tops from his back. It would have done your heart good to have seen him.

Dav. Nay, you know well enough, you do, that there is nothing but a bank of dry sand in that corner. (*with some indignation to* Pet.)

Balt. (*impatiently to* David.) Poo, silly fellow! it is the dirtiest nook in the village.—And he rose and shook himself, ha, ha, ha! (*laughing still violently.*) I did not know that thou wert such a humourous fellow, Peter. Here is money for thee to drink the brown calf's health.

Pet. Ay, your honour, for certain he shall have a noggen.

Dav. (*aside*) To think now that he should demean himself so!

Enter Mrs. Baltimore.

Mrs. B. (*aside to* Balt.) Mr. Freeman is at the door: should you wish to receive him? I hurried to give you notice. Will it be disagreeable to you?

Balt. O, not at all. Let him in, by all means! (*to the servants*) I am at home.

[Exeunt *servants.*

Mrs. B. Now, this is as it should be, my dear Baltimore. I like to see you in this good temper of mind.

Balt. Say no more about that. Things go on prosperously with me at present: there is a gleam of sunshine thrown across us.

Enter Freeman and Charles Baltimore.

(*To Free.*) Good morning, Sir: a very good morning to you.

Free. I thank you, Mr. Baltimore. You see I take, notwithstanding all that is going on between us at present, the liberty of a neighbour.

Balt. (*smiling.*) O, no apology, Sir! I am very glad to see you. This is a fine morning for riding on horseback, Mr. Freeman: I hope you have enjoyed it.

Free. (*aside to Char.*) How gracious he is! We are certainly come in a lucky moment.

Char. He is in a monstrous good humour certainly; now is the time to manage him. (*aside to* Free.)

Free. I am much obliged to you, Sir, for this good neighbourly reception; and I flatter myself you will think I am come on a neighbourly visit too.

Balt. O certainly, Sir, but let us talk a little more of this fine morning; it is really a very fine morning for riding on horseback: How does your crop-eared hunter do?

Free. Eating his oats, I dare say, very contentedly. All my horses are pretty well off: I buy the best oats in the country for them, and I pay the best price for them too. They are not, to be sure, so well lodged as they shall be. My architect has just given me in his plan for my new stables: two thousand pounds is the estimate, and I suppose I must allow him to go a little beyond it, to have every thing handsome and complete. That is my way. Will you look at the plan? (*taking a plan from his pocket.*)

Balt. (*drawing back with disgust.*) I have no taste for architecture.

Free. That is a pity now, for it is really a complete thing. By the bye, are you not going to do something to the roof of your offices soon? They'll be down about your ears presently, and the longer you delay that job, the

heavier it will be when it comes. (*aside to* Charles, *on seeing* Balt. *bite his lips and turn away from him.*) What is the matter with him now?

Char. (*aside.*) Only a little twitching at his heart: it will soon be off again.

Mrs. Balt. (*aside to* Balt.) For heaven's sake don't let this discompose you; his absurdity makes me laugh.

Balt. (*aside.*) Does it? I did not see you laugh. Well, I am a fool to mind it thus. (*going up to* Free. *with affected good humour.*) I am glad to hear your horses are to be lodged in a manner suitable to their owner's dignity. But you are the best horseman too, as well as the best horse-master, in the county, though your modesty prevents you from talking of it.

Free. O dear, Sir! I am but middling in that way.

Balt. Pray don't let your diffidence wrong you. What do you jockeys reckon the best way of managing a fiery mettled steed, when a brown calf sets his face through the hedge, and says "Mow?"

Free. Ha, ha, ha! faith, you must ask your friend Mr. Saunderson that question. His crop-eared horse has thrown him in the lane a little while ago, and he has some experience in the matter. As for myself, I have the rheumatism in my arm, and I have not been on horseback for a week. (Balt. *looks mortified and disappointed.*)

Mrs. B. (*to* Free.) He is not hurt, I hope?

Free. No, Madam; he mounted again and rode on.

Char. It was no fault of the horse's neither, if the goose had but known how to sit on his back. He has as good blood in him as any horse in—

Free. No, no, Charles! not now if you please. (*going up frankly to* Balt.) And now, Sir, that we have had our little laugh together, and it is a long time, it must be confessed, since we have had a joke together—ha, ha, ha! I like a little joke with a friend as well as any man—ha, ha, ha!

Balt. (*retreating as* Free. *advances.*) Sir.

Free. But somehow you have been too ceremonious with me, Mr. Baltimore, and I'm sure I have always wished you to consider me as a neighbour, that would be willing to do you a kind office, or lend you or any of your family a lift at any time.

(*still advancing familiarly to* Balt.)

Balt. (*still retreating.*) Sir, you are very gracious.

Free. So, as I said, since we have had our little joke together, I'll make no more preface about it, my good neighbour. (*still advancing as* Balt. *retreats, till he gets him close to the wall, and then, putting out his hand to take hold of him by the buttons,* Balt. *shrinks to one side and puts up his arm to defend himself.*)

Balt. (*hastily.*) Sir, there is no button here! (*recovering himself, and pointing in a stately manner to a chair.*) Do me the honour, Sir, to be seated, and then I shall hear what you have to say.

Free. (*offended.*) No, Sir, I perceive that the shorter I make my visit here the more acceptable it will be; I shall therefore say what I have to say, upon my legs. (*assuming consequence.*) Sir, I have by my interest, and some small degree of influence which I believe I may boast of possessing in the country, procured the nomination of a young man to a creditable and advantageous appointment in the East Indies. If you have no objection, I bestow it upon your relation, here, Mr. Charles Baltimore, of whom I have a very good opinion.

Balt. Sir, I am at a loss to conceive how you should take it into your head to concern yourself in the affairs of my family. If Mr. Charles Baltimore chooses to consider himself as no longer belonging to it, he may be glad of your protection.

Mrs. B. My dear Mr. Baltimore, how strangely you take up this matter! Indeed, Mr. Freeman, you are very good: and pray don't believe that we are all ungrateful.

Balt. (*angrily to* Charles.) And you have chosen a patron, have you?

Char. I'm sure I did not think—I'm sure I should be very glad—I'm sure I don't know what to do.

Free. Good morning, Madam: I take my leave. (*slightly to* Balt.) Good morning.

[Exit.

Char. I'm sure I don't know what to do.

Mrs. B. Whatever you do, I hope you will have the civility, at least, to see that worthy man down stairs, and thank him a hundred times over for his goodness.

Char. That I will. [Exit *hastily.*

Mrs. B. Oh, Baltimore! how could you treat any body so, that came to you with offers of kindness?

Balt. (*striding up and down.*) What would you have had me do? what would you have had me do, Madam? His abominable fingers were within two inches of my nose.

Mrs. B. Oh, Baltimore, Baltimore!

Balt. Leave me, Madam! [Exit *Mrs. B. with her handkerchief to her eyes.*

(*He still strides up and down; then stopping suddenly to listen.*)

He's not gone yet! I hear his voice still! That fool, with some cursed nonsense or other, is detaining him still in the hall! It is past all endurance! Who waits there?

Enter Peter.

What, dost thou dare to appear before me with that serpent's tongue of thine, sloughed over with lies? You dare to bring your stories to me, do you? (*shaking him violently by the collar.*)

Pet. Oh! mercy, mercy, your honour! I'm sure it was no fault of mine that it was not 'Squire Freeman that fell. I'm sure I did all I could to make him.

Balt. Do what thou can'st now, then, to

save thy knave's head from the wall.

(*Throwing* Peter *violently from him, after shaking him well; and* Exit *into an inner room, flapping the door behind him with great force.*)

Pet. (*after looking ruefully and scratching his head for some time.*) Well, I sees plainly enough that a body who tells lies should look two or three ways on every side of him before he begins. [Exit *very ruefully.*

ACT III.

Scene I.—Mrs. Baltimore's Dressing-room. She is discovered sitting by a table, looking over papers.

Mrs. B. Well, I have the satisfaction to find that my personal expenses, for this last year, have been very moderate; but I am resolved they shall be still more contracted. Though ruin, I fear, cannot be averted, yet, when it does come, I can lift up my unblushing head, and say, "this is no work of mine." No foolish debts of my contracting, Baltimore, shall add to the number of those claims that already so gallingly press upon your proud and irritable mind; and will, perhaps, in the end, drive you from the long and fondly retained habitation of your forefathers.

(*Leans pensively upon her arm for some time, then continues to look over more papers.*)

Enter Charles, with a slow sauntering step.

Char. Let me see what o'clock it is now. What says my watch to it now? (*looking at his watch.*) Pest take it! it is but ten minutes since I look'd last; and I could have sworn it was as good three quarters, or, at least, half an hour, as ever clock tick'd, or ever sand-glass ran. (*yawning and stretching himself.*) Ah! I find it has been but half and hour of a weary man's reckoning; who still sees two long long periods, ycleped hours, lying between him and his dinner, like a dreary length of desert waste before the promised land. (*yawning and stretching again.*) My fishing tackle is all broke and destroyed, and 'Squire Sapling has borrowed my pointer. I have sat shaking my legs upon the corn-chest, till every horse in the stable is rubbed down, and the groom, happy dog! has gone with his broom in his hand, to sweep out the yard and the kennel. O dear! O dear! O dear! What shall I do?

Mrs. B. (*rising from the table.*) Poor man! I pity you with all my heart; but I do think I could contrive to find employment for you, if you are inclined to it.

Char. Yes, yes! I am inclined to it! Idleness is tiresome enough, God wot! I am inclined to it, be what it will. But what is it tho'? Have you any skanes of thread to wind?

Mrs. B. No, something better than that, Charles.

Char. What, card-boxes to paste?

Mrs. B. Something better than that too.

Char. Poetry or advertisements to cut out of the news-paper?

Mrs. B. No, no, something better than all these.

Char. (*eagerly.*) It is some new employment then.

Mrs. B. Yes, Charles, a very new one indeed. What would you think of taking up a book and reading an hour before dinner?

Char. (*disappointed.*) Pshaw! is that your fine employment? I thought I was really to have something to do. I'll e'en go to the village again, and hear stories from old Margery, about the election and the old family grandeur of the Baltimores.

Mrs. B. Nay, don't put such an affront upon my recommendation. Do take up this book, and try, for once in your life, what kind of a thing reading quietly for an hour to one's self may be. I assure you there are many good stories in it, and you will get some little insight into the affairs of mankind, by the bye.

Char. No, no; no story read can ever be like a story told by a pair of moving lips, and their two lively assistants the eyes, looking it to you all the while, and supplying every deficiency of words.

Mrs. B. But try it, only try it. You can't surely be so ungallant as to refuse me. (*Gives him a book.*)

Char. Well then, since it must be so, shew me where to begin. Some people, when they open a book, can just pop upon a good thing at once, and be diverted with it; but, I don't know how it is, whenever I open a book, I can light upon nothing but long dry prefaces and dissertations; beyond which, perhaps, there may lie, at last, some pleasant story, like a little picture closet at the end of a long stone gallery, or like a little kernel buried in a great mountain of shells and of husks. I would not take the trouble of coming at it for all that one gets.

Mrs. B. You shall have no trouble at all. There is the place to begin at. Sit down, then, and make no more objections. (*points out the place, and returns to her papers again.*)

(Charles *sits down with his book: reads a little, with one arm dangling over the back of the chair; then changes his position, and reads a little while with the other arm over the back of the chair; then changes his position again, and, after rubbing his legs with his book hand, continues to read a little more; then he stops, and brushes some dust off his breeches with his elbow.*)

Mrs. B. (*observing him and smiling.*) How does the reading go on?

Char. Oh, pretty well; I shall finish the page presently. (*he reads a little longer, still fidgeting about, and then starting up from his seat.*) By the bye, that hound of a shoemaker has forgot to send home my new boots. I must go and see after them.

Mrs. B. What could possibly bring your

boots into your mind at this time, I wonder?

Char. It is no wonder at all; for whenever I begin to read, and that is not often, I confess, all the little odd things that have slipp'd out of my head for a month, are sure to come into it then. I must see after the boots tho'.

Mrs. B. Not just now.

Char. This very moment. There is no time to be lost. I must have them to-morrow at all events. Good bye to you. (*looking to the window, as he passes on towards the door.*) Ha! there comes a visiter for you.

Mrs. B. Who is it?

Char. It is Charlotte Freeman, walking very demurely, because she is within sight of the windows.

Mrs. B. I am sorry she is come. I have desired the servants to say I am from home. It is unpleasant to Mr. Baltimore to see any part of that family, and I have promised—— no, no, I have——you must go to inquire after your boots, you say. (*a gentle tap at the door.*) Come in.

Enter Charlotte.

Charl. (*going up affectionately to* Mrs. B.) I thought you would let me in. (*curtsey's affectedly to* Charles.

Mrs. B. Did the servants——

Charl. I saw no servants at all. I stole in by the little door of the shrubbery; for I did not like to go in by the great gate, lest I should meet Mr. Baltimore; and he always looks so strangely at me—But I beg pardon; I see I hurt you by saying so.

Mrs. B. Have you walked far this morning?

Charl. Only so far to see you; for you seem'd unwell when I saw you last, and I could not be happy 'till I inquired after you.

Mrs. B. You are very good, my dear Charlotte, I am very well.

Charl. (*observing her embarrass'd.*) I fear I come unseasonably.

Char. O, no! we were just wishing for some good girl to come to us; and when you go home again, I shall have the honour of attending you.

Charl. (*affectedly.*) No, I thank you, there is no occasion; I know my way very well.

Char. But I can shew you a better way, where there are fine sloes and blackberries on the hedges, if you have a mind to gather any. Eating such sweet fruit puts people into good humour and cures them of affectation.

Charl. (*disdainfully.*) I don't know what you mean, Sir, by your sloes and your blackberries, but I suppose you want to shew me the place where you cropt your black puppy's ears the other day, and had your fingers well bit for your pains. I wonder whether you or the puppy were in the best humour upon that occasion.

Char. Faith, the puppy and I were very much the better for a piece of your flounced furbelow, which we found upon the hedge, to bind up our wounds for us. For you have a great sense of justice, Miss Freeman; you never take any thing off the bushes, without leaving something in return.

Charl. And you, too, Mr. Charles, are a gentleman of great honesty; for you would not take a bit of the poor dog's ears off, without leaving a bit of your own fingers in his mouth as an equivalent.

Mrs. B. How comes it that you two are always quarrelling, and yet always coming in one another's way? (*to* Char.) You forget: you must go and see after your boots.

Char. O! I can go to-morrow morning.

Mrs. B. But there is not a moment to be lost: you must have them at all events, you know. No, no; no lingering here: it is an errand of necessity. (*pointing to the door.*)

[Exit Char. *unwillingly.*

Charl. I'm glad you have sent him away, he is so forward and so troublesome. Perhaps I am a little so myself just now. If I am, don't make any ceremony of sending me off; for I see, my dear Mrs. Baltimore, your spirits are not so good as they used to be. O! if I could do any thing to cheer them! (*Looking wistfully at her.*)

Mrs. B. I thank you, my good girl! you are not at all troublesome: you are very pleasant to me; and if it depended upon myself, I should like that we were often together.

Charl. (*taking her hand warmly.*) Should you? Well, and if it depended upon me, I should be always with you. I should go wherever you went, and do whatever you did, and wear the same caps and gowns that you wear, and look just as like you as I could. It is a sad thing that I can get to you so seldom, with those eternal lessons at home, and Mr. Baltimore's stern looks, which almost frighten me when I come here. Do you know I have often thought of writing to you, but then I don't know what to say. It is strange now! I know ladies, who love one another, write such long letters to one another every day, and yet I don't know what to say.

Mrs. B. And I have known, my dear Charlotte, ladies who did not love one another, do just the same thing.

Charl. Have you, indeed? La, that is wonderful! But don't you very often write long letters to the friends you love most?

Mrs. B. Indeed I don't write very often, nor very long letters to any body; and yet I have some friends whom I very dearly love.

Charl. (*taking* Mrs. B.'s *hand and skipping about her.*) O! I am so glad to hear that! I thought all dear friends wrote to one another every day, and that every body knew what to say but myself.—When I am with Mama, I think it will be so difficult to become amiable and accomplished, as I ought to be, that I am quite discouraged; but when I am with you, it appears so pleasant and so easy, that I am put quite into good spirits again.—But, no, no! I do every thing so clumsily! and you do every thing so well!

Mrs. B. Don't be so diffident of yourself.

Charlotte: remember you are but fifteen, and I am four-and-twenty.

Charl. I wonder how I shall look when I am four-and-twenty. I'm sure, notwithstanding all the pains both Mama and my Governess take with me, I don't think I look very well at present.

Mrs. B. Nay, my good Charlotte, you look very well always, when you don't attempt to look too well. I hope to see you turn out a very agreeable woman.

Charl. Do you think so? I am to go to public places with Mama next winter; and I have overheard her and my Governess whispering together as if I should have admirers coming about me then. But I don't think I shall. Do you think so?

Mrs. B. (*smiling.*) Indeed, I can't say: perhaps you may, and it is possible you may not; but the less you think of them, the more you will probably have.

Charl. I'm sure I think very little about them. And yet I can't help fancying to myself sometimes, how I shall behave to them.

Mrs. B. Ah! that is but a poor way of employing your fancy. Don't think too much about admirers: they won't admire you the more for that.

Charl. But I won't let them know that I think about them.

Mrs. B. But they will find it out.

Charl. Ha! but I will hold myself very high indeed, and not seem to care a farthing for one of them.

Mrs. B. But they will find it out, nevertheless.

Charl. I'm sure I have heard that the young men now-a'-days are no great conjurers.

Mrs. B. That may be very true; but they are all conjurers enough to find that out, though better things should escape their penetration. (*with some alarm.*) I hear Mr. Baltimore coming.

Charl. You seem uneasy. Will he be angry to find me here?

Mrs. B. (*much embarrassed.*) He will be surprised, perhaps; but he won't come here—he is only passing to the library, I hope.

Charl. Ha! but he is coming though! (*creeping behind* Mrs. B.) He is just at the door. I will hide myself behind the open door of this cabinet, and do you stand before me till he goes away.

(*She skulks behind the door of an open cabinet, and* Mrs. B. *stands up close by her to conceal her completely.*)

Enter Baltimore.

Balt. The tide is running against me again; and even my old servants, I have learnt, at this moment, are swilling themselves at the Cat and Bagpipes, with the damn'd ale and roast-beef of mine adversary. I am going to my attorney immediately; if any person on business should call in my absence, detain him till I return.

Mrs. B. Certainly. I wish you a pleasant ride. I think I shall take a little ramble presently, but shall leave your orders with the servants.

Balt. No, don't go out just now, I beg it of you. That little affected jade of Freeman's is prowling about; and I have already confessed to you, that it disturbs me to see you together.

Mrs. B. Ah! you are prejudiced: you talk without knowing her. She is a sweet tempered, kind-hearted girl, and nature meant her for something very different from what she appears to be. (Charlotte *behind, catches hold of* Mrs. B's *hand, and kisses it.*)

Balt. Yes, nature meant her for a clumsy—

Mrs. B. Pray don't delay going to your attorney!

Balt. A clumsy hoiden only; and, under the tuition of her ridiculous mother, she assumes all the delicate airs of a fine lady.

Mrs. B. Well, well, go to your attorney: it is all very harmless.

Balt. Well, well, it is all very harmless, if you will; and I have laughed at a thousand little affected fools, nearly as absurd as herself. But when I see those broad features of her father, stamped so strongly by nature upon her common-place countenance, pretending to wear the conscious importance of superior refinement, it provokes me beyond all patience that you should be so intimate with her.

Mrs. B. She is a girl that will very much improve by any reasonable intimacy, and will very soon become like the people she is with.

Balt. Very well, let her be as little with you, then, and as much with her own foolish absurd mother as possible; and the more ridiculous they both are, the greater pleasure I shall have in seeing them any where but in your company. I assure you, I have no wish to reform them. It is one of the few consolations I receive in my intercourse with this man, to see him connected with such a couple of fools.

Mrs. B. O Baltimore! for heaven's sake stay no longer here!

Balt. Pray what is the meaning of this? are you in your senses!

Mrs. B. Scarcely, indeed, while you remain here, and talk thus.

Balt. What, does it affect you to this pitch then? Are you attached to that girl?

Mrs. B. Indeed I am. (Charl. *behind, catches* Mrs. B's *hand again, and kisses it very gratefully.*)

Balt. Well, Madam; I see plainly enough the extent of your attachment to me. (*walking up and down vehemently.*) Methinks it should have been offensive to you even to have stroked the very ears of his dog. And that excrescence, that wart, that tadpole, that worm from the adder's nest, which I abhor.

Mrs. B. For heaven's sake, go away! you kill, you distract me!

Balt. Yes, yes, Madam; I see plainly enough I am married to a woman who takes no common interest, who owns no sympathy with my feelings.

He turns upon his heel in anger to go away, whilst Charlotte *springs from her hiding-place, and slipping softly after him, makes a motion with her foot as if she would give him a kick in the going out; upon which,* Balt. *turns suddenly round and sees her,* (*She stops short quite confounded: and he glancing a look of indignation at his wife, fixes his eyes sternly upon* Charlotte, *who, recoiling from him step by step, as he sternly frowns upon her, throws herself at last upon Mrs.* B'*s neck, and bursts into tears.* Balt. *then turns upon his heel angrily and* Exit.)

Charl. (*sobbing.*) I shall never be able to look up again as long as I live. There never was any body like me; for always when I wish to behave best, something or other comes across me, and I expose myself. I shall be so scorn'd and laugh'd at!—I'll never enter this house any more—Oh! oh! oh! Some devil put it into my head, and I could not help it. I'll go home again, and never come a visiting any more—Oh! oh! oh! I am so disgraced!

Mrs. B. Be comforted, my dear Charlotte! It was but a girl's freak, and nobody shall know any thing of it. But, indeed, you had better go home.

Charl. Yes, I'll go home, and never return here any more. But, oh, my dear Mrs. Baltimore, don't despise me!

Mrs. B. No, my dear girl, I love you as much as ever.

Charl. Do you indeed? And yet I must not come to you again. O, I shall wander every morning on the side of the little stream that divides your grounds from ours; and if I could but see you sometimes on the opposite side, calling over to me, I should be happy! It is so good in you to say that you love me; for I shall never love myself any more.

[Exeunt Mrs. *B. soothing and comforting* Charl. *as they go off.*

SCENE II.—A SMALL ANTI-ROOM IN FREEMAN'S HOUSE.

Enter Mrs. Freeman with letters in her hand.

Mrs. F. (*holding out her letters.*) Pretty well, I think, for one day's post. I should write to my dear Mrs. Languish too, if my extracts from Petrarch were ready.

Enter Governess in great haste.

Gov. O dear, Madame! I don't know what ting I shall do wit Miss Freeman.

Mrs. F. What is the matter?

Gov. She come in, since a very little time from her walk, and I believe she be to see Madame Baltimore too, as drooping and as much out of spirit as a pair of ruffles wid de starch out of dem; and she sit down so, (*imitating her*) quite frompish, and won't read her lesson to me, though I speak all de good words to her dat I can.

Mrs. F. Well, go to her again, and I'll follow you immediately, and speak to her myself. [Exit Governess.

(Mrs. F. *after putting up her letters very leisurely, and looking at one or two of them, goes out.*)

SCENE III.—CHARLOTTE IS DISCOVERED SITTING IN A DISCONSOLATE POSTURE, ON A LOW STOOL IN THE MIDDLE OF THE ROOM; THE GOVERNESS STANDING BY HER, ENDEAVOURING TO SOOTHE AND COAX HER, WHILST SHE HITCHES AWAY FROM HER FRETFULLY, PUSHING HER STOOL TOWARDS THE FRONT OF THE STAGE EVERY TIME THE GOVERNESS ATTEMPTS TO SOOTHE HER.

Gov. Do be de good young lady, now, and read over your lesson.

Charl. Can't you let me alone for a moment? I'm not in a humour just now.

Gov. You be in de humours, but in de bad humours, I see. I will put you in de good humours. Look here! Fal, lal, de laddy, daddy (*singing fantastically.*) Why don't you smile, Miss? You love dat air, don't you? (*Putting her hand soothingly on* Charlotte's *shoulder, and grinning in her face.*)

Charl. (*shaking off her hand impatiently, turning her back to her, and sitting on the other side of the stool.*) I dont like it a bit.

Gov. O, but you do! And den de pretty, steps I shew'd you: if you would read your lesson, now, we should dance dem togeder. (*singing and dancing some French steps fantastically.*) Why don't you look at me? Don't it amuse you, Miss?

Charl. What amusement is it to me, do you think, to see a pair of old fringed shoes clattering upon the boards?

Gov. (*shrugging her shoulders.*) Mon Dieu! she has no taste for any of the elegancies. (*putting her hand upon* Charlotte's *shoulder coaxingly.*) But if you don't speak well de French, and write well de French, de pretty fine gentlemans won't admire you.

Charl. (*shaking off her hand again, and turning from her to sit on the other side of the stool.*) And what do I care for de pretty fine gentlemans, or de pretty fine ladies either? I wish there was not such a thing in the world as either of them.

Gov. (*casting up her eyes.*) Mon Dieu! She wish us all out of de world.

Charl. I'm sure I should live an easier life than I do, if there was not—

Enter Mrs. Freeman.

Mrs. F. What freak is this you have taken into your head, Miss Freeman, not to read with Ma'moiselle. It won't do, I assure you, to follow your own whimsies thus. You must study regularly and diligently, if you would ever become an elegant and accomplished woman.

Charl. I'm sure I shall never become either elegant or accomplished. Why need I scrawl

versions eternally, and drum upon the pianoforte, and draw frightful figures till my fingers ache, and make my very life irksome to me, when I know very well I shall never be better than a poor heedless creature, constantly forgetting and exposing myself, after all? I know very well I shall never be either elegant or accomplished.

Mrs. F. Why should you suppose so? there is no merit in being too diffident.

Gov. You should not tink so poor of yourself, Miss. You come on very well. Several lady say dat you are become so like to me in all de airs, and de grace, and de manners, dat you are quite odder ting dan you were.

Charl. No wonder then that they laugh at me.

Gov. (*casting up her eyes.*) Mon Dieu! She is mad! shall I shut her up in her chamber?

Mrs. F. Stop a little, if you please: she does not speak altogether from the purpose neither. Come, come, Miss Freeman: rouse yourself up, and have some laudable ambition: the distinction of elegant accomplishments is not to be obtained without industry and attention.

Charl. I wish I were with some of the wild people that run in the woods, and know nothing about accomplishments! I know I shall be a blundering creature all my life, getting into scrapes that no body else gets into; I know I shall. Why need I study my carriage, and pin back my shoulders, and hamper myself all day long, only to be laughed at after all?

Mrs. F. I don't know what you may meet with when you chuse to visit by yourself, Miss Freeman; but in my company, at least, you may be satisfied upon that score.

Charl. And what satisfaction will it be to me that we are ridiculous together? I would rather be laughed at alone than have people laughing at us both, as they do.

Mrs. F. (*with amazement.*) The creature is beside herself in good earnest! What do you mean, child? Who have you been with? Who has put these things into your head? If Mrs. Baltimore can find no better conversation for you than this kind of insolent impertinence, she is poorly employed indeed.

Charl. It was not Mrs. Baltimore that said so.

Mrs. F. Who said so then? somebody has, I find.

Charl. It was Mr. Baltimore.

Mrs. F. And you had the meanness to suffer such words in your presence?

Charl. It was not in my presence neither, for he did not see me.

Mrs. F. And where was you then?

Charl. Just behind the train of Mrs. Baltimore's gown, till he should go out again.

Mrs. F. And so you sneaked quietly in your hiding-place, and heard all this insolent abuse? Mean creature! a girl of any spirit whould have rushed out upon him with indignation.

Charl. And so did I rush out.

Mrs. F. And what did you say to him?

Charl. (*sillily.*) I did not say any thing.

Mrs. F. I hope you resented it then, by the silent dignity of your behaviour.

Charl. (*much embarrassed.*) I'm sure I don't know—I did but give him a little make-believe kick with my slipper, as he went out at the door, when he turned round of a sudden, with a pair of terrible eyes staring upon me like the Great Mogul.

Mrs. F. A make-believe kick! what do you mean by that?

Charl. La! just a kick on—on—

Mrs. F. On what, child?

Charl. La! just upon his coat behind as he went out at the door.

Mrs. F. And did you do that? Oh! it is enough to make one mad! You are just fit to live with the Indians, indeed, or the wild Negroes, or the Hottentots! To disgrace yourself thus, after all the pains I have taken with you! It is enough to drive one mad! Go to your room directly, and get sixteen pages of blank verse by rote. But I'm sure you are fitter company for the pigs than the poets.

Charl. How was I to know that he had eyes in the back of his neck, and could know what was doing behind him?

Mrs. F. He shall have eyes upon all sides of his head, if he escape from my vengeance. It shall cost him his election, let it cost me what it will. (*rings the bell violently.*) Who waits there? (*enter a servant.*) Order the chariot to be got ready immediately. (Exit *servant.*) I will go to Mr. Jenkinson directly. He has already pointed out the means; and I shall find money, without Mr. Freeman's knowing any thing of the matter, to manage it all well enough.

Charl. La! I'm sure I knew well enough I did wrong; but I did not think of all this uproar about it.

Mrs. F. Go to your own room, child: I can't abide the sight of you. (Exeunt *Mrs.* F. *on one side of the stage, and* Charl. *and* Governess *on the other.*)

ACT IV.

Scene I.—A summer apartment in Baltimore's house, with a glass door opened to a lawn. The scene without is seen in the sober light of a calm summer evening, with the sun already set.

Enter Baltimore and Mrs. Baltimore form an inner room. Baltimore speaking as they enter.

Balt. Let us say no more about it, then. I forgive the little deceit of concealment which my temper, become too hasty of late, may, perhaps, justify. I will confess that the irritation excited in my mind by seeing that

girl so frequently with you is unreasonable, is capricious. But you must bear with me a little, my Isabella. It is a part of the infirmity that oppresses me: it is the fretted edge of a deep and rankling——Come, come, come! we'll say no more about it. Let us forswear this subject. Let us now talk, even when we are alone, of light and indifferent things.

Mrs. B. Indeed, I believe it will be safest for us, till this passing storm, it will be but a summer storm I hope, is past over our heads. (*assuming cheerfulness.*) And now, to begin upon this salutary plan of your's, without loss of time, let me boast to you of the beautiful collection of plants I have nursed with my own hands, in a sly corner of the garden. You have never yet been to see them.

Balt. (*eagerly.*) Ay, even there too.

Mrs. B. What do you mean?

Balt. (*peevishly.*) Go to! you have heard, as well as I, of the ridiculous expense he has been at in seeds, and rare plants, and flower-roots, and nonsense; and of the learned botanist he is to pay so liberally for publishing a catalogue of them for the use of the scientific world—All that abominable ostentation. Ha, ha, ha! He does not know a nettle from a crow-foot on his native fields. Ha, ha, ha, ha!—You don't laugh, I think?

Mrs. B. We were to talk, you know, of indifferent things. But I have forgot to tell you of what really is not indifferent: I had a letter from my sister this morning, and, she says, your little godson is quite recovered from the remains of his illness. (*pauses for an answer.*)

Balt. (*nodding his head but not attending to her.*) Umph.

Mrs. B. (*coaxingly.*) She says he has become so chattering, and so playful, it is delightful to see him! And he talks of his godfather very often!

Balt. (*nodding again.*) Umph.

Mrs. B. He was always a great favourite of yours.

Balt. (*breaking out vehemently.*) If any man but himself had been guilty of half that ridiculous vanity, the dullest fool in the county would have laughed at him.

Mrs. B. O dear! still dwelling upon these ideas!

(*He turns from her, and walks to the bottom of the stage; she sighs deeply, and follows him with her eyes. A long pause.*)

Enter Servet.

Serv. (*to* Balt.) Excuse me, if I intrude, Sir. And you too, my good lady, (*bowing very low to* Mrs. B.) Here is a letter that I received a few moments ago, and I thought it expedient and proper that you should know its contents immediately. (*gives the letter to* Balt.)

Balt. Let me see. (*reads.*) "An unknown well-wisher thinks it right to inform you, that your friend"—

Serv. He ought to have said patron, Sir, I'm sure, I have always been proud to name you as my patron to every body:—the family of Baltimore has always been such to me.

Balt. Well, well, no matter. (*reads again.*) "To ruin your friend, 'Squire Baltimore. His adversary"—

Serv. Meaning Freeman, Sir.

Balt. I understand! (*reads again.*) "His adversary being busy in buying up the claims of some of his principal creditors. If he would walk long at large, let him walk cautiously."

Serv. Meaning that he will lay you up, Sir.

Balt. I understand it perfectly.

Mrs. B. O no, no! Some malicious person has written this.

Balt. Permit me, Madam, to speak to my man of business, without interruption.

Serv. No wonder, Sir, that Mrs. Baltimore should think so. He makes such a good show with his actions, that he must set about such things very cunningly.

Balt. Yes, Servet, thou hast always had some notion of his true character.

Serv. To think that there should be such hypocrisy in the world! It grieves, it distresses me!

Balt. Pooh, man! never mind how many hypocrites there are in the world, if he be but found amongst the number.

Serv. Ay, Sir; but if he get you once into prison—

Balt. Will he not be detested for it?

Serv. But if he should take the borough from you—

Balt. Well! and if he should take my life too, would he not be hanged for it?

Serv. To be sure, there would be some satisfaction in that, if you could peep through your winding-sheet to see it.

Balt. He will now appear to the world in his true colours: I shall now speak boldly of a determined and palpable wrong: it relieves me from a heavy load. Give me thy hand, my friend Servet; thou hast brought me admirable news.

Serv. But, Sir, we must take care of our selves; for he is come of such a low, cunning, mean set of people—

Balt. Ha! you know this, do you? You know something of his family?

Serv. Yes, I know well enough: and his father every body knows was no better than a—a—a——

Balt. Than a what?—Out with it, man!

Serv. Than a—than a—

Balt. (*eagerly.*) Than a thief? Is that it? O prove to me, only prove to me, that his father was a thief, and I'll give thee all that I have in the world.

Serv. No, not absolutely that—but no better than a paltry weaver.

Balt. (*disappointed.*) Pooh! I knew that before.

Serv. Yes, every body knows it, to be sure. But there is no time to be lost: I am so zealous about it, that I can't rest till I have

further information. I'll take horse directly, and go in quest of it. I know where to inquire, and I shall return to you without loss of time.

Balt. Do so, my good friend, and don't be afraid of bringing back what you will call bad news. I shall not shrink from it.

(Exit *Servet.*

(*turning to* Mrs. B. *who has been listening to their conversation with great marks of distrust and disapprobation.*)

And so, Madam, you are diffident of all this?

Mrs. B. It will be impossible at this moment to make you view it in the same light that I do.

Balt. Yes, Madam, I knew it would be so with you. He has bewitched and thrown a veil over the understandings of all men! I have perceived it long. Even from the first of his settling in the neighbourhood, my friends have begun to look on me not as they were wont to do. Even my very tenants and dependants salute me less cheerily. He has thrown a veil over the understandings of all men! He has estranged from me that sympathy and tenderness, which should have supported my head in the day of adversity.

Mrs. B. Ah, my dear Baltimore! It is you who have got a veil, a thick and gloomy veil cast over your mind. That sympathy and tenderness is still the same (*pressing his hand.*) And, if the day of adversity must come, you will be convinced of it. But let us for a while give up thinking of these things: let us walk out together, and enjoy the soothing calmness of this beautiful twilight. The evening-star already looks from his peaceful sky; no sound of busy man is to be heard; the bat, and the beetle, and the night-fly, are abroad, and the pleasing hum of happy unseen life is in the air. Come forth, my husband. The shade of your native trees will wave over your head; the turf your infant feet first trod will be under your steps. Come forth, my friend, and more blessed thoughts will visit you.

Balt. No, no; my native trees and my native lawns are to me more cheerless than the dreary desert. I can enjoy nothing. The cursed neighbourhood of one obnoxious being has changed every thing for me. Would he were—(*clenching his hands and muttering.*)

Mrs. B. O! what are you saying?

Balt. (*turning away from her.*) No matter what.

Enter a little Boy from the lawn by the glass-door running wildly, and frightened.

Boy. He'll be drown'd, if nobody runs to save him! He'll be drown'd! he'll be drown'd!

Mrs. B. Has any body fallen into the pond?

Boy. Yes, Madam; into the deepest part of it; and, if nobody don't run to pull him out, he'll be drowned.

Balt. (*running eagerly towards the glass-door.*)

I'll go. Dost thou know who it is, boy?

Boy. Yes, to be sure, Sir; it is 'Squire Freeman's own self. (Balt. *starts, and stops short.* Mrs. B. *clasping her hands and holding them up to heaven, remains in anxious suspense.* Balt. *after a moment's pause, rushes out quickly.*)

Mrs. B. O God! what will this come to!

(*Throws herself back into a chair, and remains stupid and motionless. The boy stands staring at her.*)

Boy. Are you not well, Ma'am? Shall I call any body? (*She makes no answer; he still stands staring at her.*) She don't speak: she don't look at nothing: I will call somebody. (*goes to the side-scene, and calls.*) Who's there, I beseech you? O, hear me, hear me! Who's there, I say?

Enter Housemaid and Coachman.

Housem. What a bawling you make here, with your dusty feet, you little nasty jackanapes! How dare you for to steal into a clean house?

Coach. If he be'n't that little devil that put the cracker under my horse's tail, I have no eyes in my head. He is always prowling about: there is never a dog hanged, nor a kitten drowned, in the parish, but he must be after it.

Boy. (*pointing.*) Look there: what is the matter with the lady?

Housem. O, mercy on us! my dear good lady! Are you sick, Ma'am? or swooning? or beside yourself? Run, Coachy, stupid oaf! and fetch us something.

Coach. I would run to the farthest nook of the earth if I only knew what to bring. Will burnt feathers, or a little aqua-vitæ do you any good?

Mrs. B. (*starting up.*) Do you hear any noise? Are they coming yet? I'll go out myself. (*endeavours to go out, but cannot.*) Housemaid *and* Coachman *support her.*)

Enter David hastily from the lawn.

Dav. He is saved, Madam!

Mrs. B. O, what say you, David?

Dav. He has saved 'Squire Freeman. He threw himself into the deep water, and plashed about his arms lustily, till he caught him by the hair of his head, and drew him to the bank. One minute more had made a dead man of him.

Mrs. B. Who did that? Who caught him by the hair of the head?

Dav. My master, Madam; and a brave man he is.

Mrs. B. (*holding up her hands in extacy.*) Thy master! ay, and my husband! and God Almighty's good creature, who has formed every thing good! O, yes! he has made every being with good in it, and will at last make it perfectly so, in some way or other, known only to his wisdom. Ha! I hear a noise on the lawn.

Boy. (*running out.*) I must not lose a sight of the drowned man. For he'll be as drop-

ping wet as any corpse, I dare say; for all that there is life in him. [EXIT.

Mrs. B. I'll go and meet them. I'm strong enough now.

Dav. Let me support you, Madam.

Housem. (*to* Coach. *as they go out.*) La! will he be all wet, do you think, and stretched upon his back?

(EXEUNT *by the glass door into the lawn,* Mrs. B. *supported by* David. *Light from a window is now thrown across the path without doors, and discovers* Baltimore *and servants carrying* Freeman *into the house by another entry. The scene closes.*)

SCENE II.—A ROOM IN BALTIMORE'S HOUSE.

Enter SIMEON and DAVID.

Dav. Now, my Old Simeon, you'll see your master as hearty, after his ducking, as if he were an otter, and could live either in the water or out of it; though we had some trouble to bring him to his senses at first.

Sim. Ay, do let me go to him quickly. It had been a sorrowful day to this grey head, if my master had—

Dav. Yes, and if my master had not, as a body may say, put his life in his hand to save him.

Sim. Very true, David, I say nothing against all that; I honour your master for it; thof I must say he has but an ungracious look with him. There is not another gentleman in the neighbourhood, thof I say it myself, that does not stop and say, "How do you do, Old Simeon?" when he passes me.

Dav. I don't know; I'm sure he used not to be ungracious. All the old folks of the parish used to thrust themselves in his way, as if it had been good for the ague, or an aching in the bones, to say, "God bless your honour."

Sim. That must have been before we came amongst you, then. Ha! here comes his Honour.

Enter FREEMAN, dressed in a night-gown, with TRUEBRIDGE and Charles BALTIMORE. Mrs. BALTIMORE, at the same time, enters by another door.

Sim. (*going eagerly to his master, and kissing his hand, which* Freeman *holds out to him.*) God bless and preserve your worthy Honour!

Free. I thank you, Simeon: a good God has preserved me. You have not been much alarmed, I hope?

Sim. No, Sir; I heard of your safety before I heard of your danger; but some how or other it came across my heart, for all that; and I could not but think—I could not—(*pauses and draws the back of his hand across his eyes.*) But the blessings of the aged and helpless have borne you up: the water could have no commission to hurt you.

True. Well said, good Simeon! the blessings of the aged, and the helpless are of a very buoyant quality. A cork jacket is nothing to them.

Free. Do my wife and daughter know of it?

Sim. No, please your Honour; my mistress is not returned from her visit yet, and my poor young lady is closed up in her room with Madumselle, taking on her book-larning, as I suppose.

Free. I'll go home then, before they know any thing of it. (*to Mrs.* B.) My dear Madam, I return you my warmest acknowledgments. You flattered me, that I should have an opportunity, before I leave the house, of thanking, once more, the brave man who has saved my life.

Mrs. B. He will come to you immediately.

Char. (*to* Mrs. B.) Faith! I went to him myself, as you desired me, and he won't come.

Mrs. B. (*frowning significantly to* Char.) I have just come from him, and he will be here immediately.

Char. You went too, did you? I could'nt—(Mrs. B. *frowns again, and* Char. *is silent.*)

True. (*to* Free.) You had better sit down till he come.

Char. Yes, do sit in this chair in the recess; for you don't like the light in your eyes, I perceive. (*leading* Free. *kindly to the chair.*)

Free. I thank you. You are very good to me, friend Charles. I think you would have lent a helping hand yourself, if you had been in the way, to have saved a poor neighbour from drowning.

Char. I should have been a Pagan else. (Free. *sits down, and they all gather round him.*) Now, my good Sir, it is pleasanter to sit in a dry seat like this, with so many friendly faces round you, than to squash among the cold mud and duck-weed with roaches and eels for your comrades.

Free. Indeed, friend Charles, I sha'n't contradict you.

Enter BALTIMORE, going directly across the stage towards the opposite door, by which FREE. and the others had entered, without perceiving them in the recess.

Free. He thinks I am still in the bed-room. (*goes behind* Balt. *and lays his hand kindly upon his shoulder.*)

Balt. Nay, my dear Isabella! let me go by myself! I would rather encounter him alone, than when you are all staring upon me.

Free. (*still holding him.*) Ha, ha, ha! my brave deliverer! I have caught you.

Balt. (*turning hastily about, and shaking himself loose from his hold.*) Ha! is it you?

Free. (*stepping back disappointed.*) It is me, Sir; and I flattered myself that the overflowings of a grateful heart would not be offensive.

Balt. They are not offensive, Sir; you mistake me. You are too—There is no occasion for all these thanks: I do not deserve them.

Sim. (*vehemently.*) Ah, but you do, Sir!

and all the country round will thank you too. There is not a soul of them all, thof he might not care a brass penny for you before, who will not fill a bumper to your health now, for saving to them his noble and liberal Honour. O, Sir ! the blessings of every body will be upon your head now.

Balt. (*turning away frowningly from* Sim.) So, so !

Mrs. B. Old Simeon says very true : every body will bless you.

Balt. (*turning away from her.*) This is pleasant indeed !

Char. I'll be hanged if every old woman in the parish don't foist you into her next Sunday's prayers, along with the Royal Family.

Balt. (*turning away from* Char.) Must I be beleagur'd by every fool? (*goes hastily towards the door.*)

Mrs. B. (*aside, running after him.*) You will not go away so abruptly ?

Balt. (*aside to her.*) Will there be no end to this damned gratitude ? (*about, to* Free.) Sir, I am very happy—I—I hope you will have a good sleep after this accident ; and I shall be happy to hear good accounts of you to-morrow morning.

Free. No, Mr. Baltimore, we must not part thus. My gratitude for what you have done is not to be spent in words only : that is not my way. I resign to you, and resign to you most cheerfully, all my interest in the borough of Westown.

(*Balt. pauses.*)

True. That is nobly said, Mr. Freeman, and I expected it from you.

Char. (*rubbing his hands and grinning with delight.*) I thought so !—I thought it would come to this : he has such a liberal way with him in every thing.

Balt. (*half aside to* Char.) Wilt thou never give over that vile habit of grinning like a dog ? (*going up with a firm step to* Free.) No, Sir ; we have entered the lists as fair combatants together, and neither of us, I hope, (*significantly*) have taken any unfair advantage of the other. Let the most fortunate gain the day. I will never receive reward for a common office of humanity. That is not my way (*mimicking* Freeman.)

Free. Let me entreat you !

Balt. Mention it no more : I am determined.

Free. It would make me infinitely happy.

Balt. Do me the honour to believe that I speak truth, when I say, I am determined. If you give up the borough, I give it up also.

Free. Then I say no more. I leave with you the thanks of a grateful heart. I should have said, if it had been permitted me, the very grateful affection of an honest heart, that it will never forget what it owes to you but in that place where both affection and animosity are forgotten. (Exit *with emotion, followed by* Charles and Simeon.)

Mrs. B. O Baltimore ! Baltimore ! Will you suffer him to go thus ?

Balt. (*going two or three steps after him, and stopping short.*) He is gone now.

Mrs. B. No, he is not ; you may easily overtake him. Do—for the love of gentleness and charity !

Balt. (*going hastily towards the door, and stopping short again.*) No, hang it ! I can't do it now. (Exit *hastily by the opposite side.*)

Mrs. B. (*shaking her head.*) I had great hopes from this accident ; but his unhappy aversion is, I fear, incurable.

True. Don't despair yet : I prophecy better things. But do not, my dear Madam, before Baltimore at least, appear so anxious about it. It serves only to irritate him.

Mrs. B. Is it possible to be otherwise than anxious ? This unlucky prejudice, gradually gaining strength from every little trivial circumstance, embitters all the comfort of our lives. And Freeman has so many good qualities—he might have been a valuable friend.

True. Very true ; he is liberal, good-tempered, and benevolent : but he is vain, unpolished, and, with the aid of his ridiculous wife to encourage him, most provokingly ostentatious. You ought to make some allowance for a proud country gentleman, who now sees all the former dependants of his family ranging themselves under the patronage of a new, and, what he will falsely call, a mean man.

Mrs. B. O, I would make every allowance ! but I would not encourage him in his prejudice

True. The way to reclaim him, however, is not to run directly counter to it. I have never found him so ready to acknowledge Freeman's good qualities as when I have appeared, and have really been half provoked myself with his vanity and magnificence. When we would help a friend out of the mire, we must often go a little way into it ourselves.

Mrs. B. I believe you are right. Ah ! Truebridge ! if you had been more amongst us lately, we should not now, perhaps, have been so unhappy. He would have listened more to you than any other friend.

True. Have good comfort : I don't despair. [Exeunt.

Scene III.—Night. An open space before the Blue Posts : the scene dark, except where the light gleams from the open door of the house. A noise of drinking and merriment heard within.

Enter some of Baltimore's Voters, &c. from the house, carrying a table, a bowl of punch and glasses, which they set down in the porch, and place themselves round on the benches at the door.

Sailor. Now, messmates, let us set down our bowl here. We have been long enough stow'd in that there close smoky hold, while the fresh air has been playing on the decks. Let us sit down and be merry ! I am return'd

house in a good jolly time, old neighbours; let us enjoy it.

First Vote. Ay, I remember at our last election, when 'Squire Burton was chosen, we drank a hearty bowl in this very porch, and neighbour Bullock, the tanner, sat as it were in that very corner. Rest his soul! he loved his country, and his king, and his cause, and his candidate, as well as any heart in Old England.

Second Vote. Ay, and he was always ready to knock any body down that was not as hearty as himself. That was what I liked in him. That was the true spirit. That was the true roast beef of Old England.

First Vote. And he had such a good knack at a toast. Come, stand up, Mr. Alderman. We have drunk already to the ancient family of the Baltimores, give us some other good public toast. You have a good knack at the business too. I would give you one myself, but then I doesn't know how to do it for want of education.

Ald. (*standing up conceitedly.*) May all the king, and the queen, and the royal family, and all the rest of the nobility and members of parliament, serving over them and under us be good; and may all us, serving under them again be—be—be happy and be good too, and be—and be—

Second Vote. Just as we should be.

First Vote. Ay, just so. Very well and very nicely said, Mr. Alderman!

Second Vote. But does nobody drink to the navy of old England?

Ald. Yes, man: stop a little, and I'll have a touch at that too.

First Vote. Ay, do so. I stand up for the British navy; that I do. The sea is our only true friend, either by land or by water. Come, give us a sailor's song, Will Weatherall. I have lived upon dry land all my days, and never saw better than a little punt-boat shov'd across the ferry for a sixpence; but some how or other I have a kindness for every thing that pertains to the great salt sea, with all the ships, and the waves roaring, and all that; and whenever I sees a good heart of oak seated at an alehouse door, with his glass in his hand, my heart always turns to him, an there should be a hundred men besides. Give us a song, man.

Sailor. That I will. Hang me if thou does'n't deserve to feed upon biscuit.

SONG.

Merry mantling social bowl,
Many a cheerful kindly soul
Fills his glass from thee:
Healths' go round, care is drown'd,
Every heart with lighter bound
Gen'rous feels and free.

Cann and beaker by thy side,
May'st thou oft' in flowing pride
Thus surrounded be:
And shame befal the narrow mind,
That to a messmate proves unkind,
Who once has fill'd his glass from thee!

Whate'er our state, where'er we meet,
We still with kindly welcome greet
The mate of former jollity:
Far distant, in a foreign land,
We'll give to all a brother's hand
That e'er have fill'd their glass from thee.

Enter MARGERY, in a great fury.

Mar. Dash down your bowl, and break all your glasses in shivers! Are you sitting singing here, and 'Squire Baltimore hurried away to prison by his vile rascality creditors? Shame upon your red chops! Who pays for the liquor you are drinking?

All. You're wrong in the head, Margery.

Mar. Ye're wrong in the heart, and that's a worse thing, ungrateful punch swillers! You would be all up on end in a moment else; for I saw them lay their detestable paws upon him with mine own eyes. Rise up every skin of you, or I'll break the bowl about your ears! I'll make the liquor mount to your noddles, I warrant you!

All. (*starting up.*) Which way did they go?

Mar. Come, follow me, and I'll shew you. Let them but come within reach of my clench'd fist, and I'll teach them to lay hands upon his honour! An esquire and a gentleman born. [EXEUNT, *every body following her with great noise and hubbub.*)

ACT V.

SCENE I.—A VAULTED PASSAGE IN A PRISON.

Enter Keeper, with several TURNKEYS bearing pots of porter, &c. for the prisoners.

Keep. (*calling to somebody without.*) Take another pot of porter to the dog-stealer in the north ward, and a Welsh rabbit to his comrade. (*to another who enters with a covered dish.*) Where have you been all this time?

1st Turn. Waiting on the rich debtor in the best chamber; he has fallen out with his stew'd carp, because the sauce of it be'nt cook'd to his liking.

Keep. I'm sorry for that: we must spare no pains upon him.

Enter 2d TURNKEYS.

2d Turn. (*holding out a small jug.*) Come, come, this won't do. Transportation-Betty says, nothing but true neat Hollands for her; and this here gin you have sent her be'nt fit for a gentlewoman to drink.

Keep. Yes, yes; travell'd ladies are woundy nice. However, we must not quarrel with her neither: take it to the poor author in the debtor's ward; it will be good enough for him.

Enter Truebridge.

True. What part of the prison is Mr. Baltimore in?

Keep. I'll shew you, Sir; follow me.

True. I thought to have found him in your own house. In the common prison?

Keep. It is his own fault, Sir; he would go no where else; and the more miserable every thing is about him, the better he likes it. His good lady could scarcely prevail upon him to let us set a couple of chairs in his room.

True. Has she been long here?

Keep. Better than an hour, I should think.

True. Does he seem much affected?

Keep. Anan, Sir?

True. I mean, much cast down.

Keep. O, Lud; no, Sir! I dare say not; you know people are used to such things every day.

True. Very true, Mr. Keeper, I forgot that— Show me the way. [Exeunt.

Scene II.—A prison. Baltimore is discovered sitting in a thoughtful posture, with Mrs. Baltimore resting her arm on the back of his chair, and observing him attentively.

Balt. (*after starting up with alacrity, and walking several times up and down.*) And they are calling out, as they go thro' the streets, that I am a true Baltimore, and the son of their old benefactor?

Mrs. B. They are, indeed. The same party that assembled to attempt your rescue, are still parading about tumultuously, and their numbers are continually increasing.

Balt. That's right! The enemy, I hope, has heard the sound of it round his doors: they have bid him a good morrow cheerily.

Mrs. B. I don't believe they suspect him yet, for it is too bad to imagine.

Balt. (*exultingly.*) But they will all know it soon. All the world will know it. Man, woman, and child will know it; and even clothed in the very coats his ostentatious bounty has bestow'd upon them, the grey-headed labourers will curse him. Ha, ha, ha, ha! How many chaldrons of coals, and hogsheads of ale, and well fatten'd oxen will, in one untoward moment, be forgotten by those ungrateful hinds! Ha, ha, ha! The very children will call to him as he passes by. Methinks I tread lightly on the floor of this dungeon, with the step of an injured man who rises from the grasp of oppression. Raise thy drooping head, my Isabella: I am a thousand times more happy than I have been: all mankind will sympathize with me now.

Mrs. B. Every honest breast, indeed, must detest baseness and hypocrisy.

Balt. Ay, thou speak'st with some energy now. Come to my heart! there will be sympathy between us. Now, thou art the wife of Baltimore! But oh! my Isabella! a poor man's wife has many duties to fulfil.

Mrs. B. None that I will not most cheerfully fulfil.

Balt. Ah! thou art a fair flower planted on an ungracious soil, and I have nursed thee rudely.

Mrs. B. O, no! you were most kind and gentle once.

Balt. And I will be so again, Isabella: for this viper gnaw'd at my heart, and I could be gentle to nothing; not even to thee. But my heart feels lighter now: I will be rough to thee no more.

Enter Truebridge.

Ha! my friend! good morning to you! Nay, nay: (*taking his hand frankly.*) don't be afraid to look at me: I wear no desponding face upon it. (*pointing to the bare walls of his prison.*) You see what a happy thing it is to have a liberal, generous, magnificent rival to contend with. Have you seen any of my good noisy friends in your way?

True. Yes, crowds of them; and I really believe this arrest will gain you your election. There is something in man that always inclines him to the side of the oppressed.

Balt. Ay, by God! and the savage feels it more strongly than the philosopher.

True. He was always a ridiculous ostentatious fellow; but if Freeman has thought to ruin your cause by the unworthy means you hint at, he is the greatest fool as well as the greatest knave in the community.

Balt. (*ironically.*) Don't be too severe upon him! he has been bred to turn his money to good account, you know: a purchased debt is his property as well as a bale of broadcloth; and he has a great many charitable deeds and bountiful donations to put into the balance against one little underhand act of unmanly baseness.

True. Hang all his bountiful donations! If he has done this, I will curse him by the hour-glass with any good fellow that will keep me company.

Balt. Nay, nay, nay! you are warm, Truebridge. You are of an irritable disposition. You have no charitable allowances to make for the failings of good people. Ha, ha, ha!

Enter Turnkey.

Turn. Mr. Freeman begs to be admitted to see Mr. Baltimore.

Balt. (*stretching out his arm vehemently.*) Does he, by my conscience! (*to* True.) What think you of this?

True. If things are as we suspect, it does, indeed, exceed all ordinary calculations of effrontery.

Balt. (*to* Turn.) Let him be admitted. (Exit Turn.) Now we shall see the smoothness of his snake's skin; but the switch, not the sword, shall scotch it. (*walks hastily up and down.*)

Enter Freeman.

Balt. (*stopping short upon his entrance, and*

assuming an ironical respect.) Good morning, worthy Sir. You are the only man in England, I may say in Europe, nay, I will say in the whole habitable globe, for you love magnificence, Mr. Freeman, whose dauntless confidence could have been wound up to the steady intrepidity of such a visit.

Free. (*simply.*) O, no, my friend; don't praise me more than I deserve. In courage to run to the assistance of a friend, you yourself have set me the example; and my character, I hope, will never be found deficient in any thing that becomes a good neighbour, and an honest man.

Balt. (*smiling sarcastically.*) Certainly, sir; be at all pains to preserve, in the public opinion, your invaluable character. I would really advise you to have a certificate of all your eminent virtues drawn up, and sign'd by every housekeeper in the parish. Your wonderful liberalities in worsted hose and linsey-woolsey petticoats; your princely subscriptions for bridges and market-places; and your noble donations to lying-in hospitals, have raised your reputation over the whole country: and if the baseness of treacherously entrapping a fair and open rival, whom you profess'd to respect, can throw any shade upon your sublime virtues, you have only to build a tower to the parish church, or a new alms-house, and that will set every thing to rights again. (*aside to* True.) Look how he draws in his detestable mouth, and stares upon me like a cat!

Free. I now perceive, Sir, the point of your discourse, and I forgive every thing that it insinuates. I might say many things, but there is just one simple answer I will return to it. All my fortune is at this moment at your disposal. You shall now be a free unencumber'd man, owing no man any thing. For how can you be said to be indebted to one who owes even his own life to you. To tell you this, was my errand here.

Balt. (*shrinking back and then recovering himself with proud disdain.*) And I, noble Sir, have one simple answer to return to you: I will rather remain in this prison till the hand of death unbolt my door, than owe my enlargement to you. Your treachery and your ostentatious generosity are equally contemptible.

Free. On the word of an honest man, I have had no knowledge of this shameful arrest.

Balt. And on the word of a gentleman, I believe you not.

Free. Will you put this affront upon me?

Balt. (*smiling maliciously.*) Only if you are obliging enough to bear it. Do entirely as you please, (*aside to* True. *turning away contemptuously from* Free.) See how like a sneaking timid reptile he looks. (*walks up and down proudly.*)

Mrs. B. much alarmed (*to* Free.) O leave him! leave him! You must not speak to him now: he knows not what he says.

True. (*aside to* Free.) Go away for the present, Mr. Freeman, and I will call upon you by and bye. If you are an honest man, you are a noble one.

Free. (*impressively.*) In simple truth, then, I am an honest man; and shall be glad to have some discourse with you, whenever you are at leisure. [Exit.

Balt. (*stopping short in his walk and looking round.*) Is he gone? (*to* True.) what did you think of that? Was it not admirable? (*endeavouring to laugh, but cannot.*) The devil himself will now appear a novice in hypocrisy.

True. Faith! Baltimore, I cannot think him guilty: he wears not the face of a guilty man.

(Baltimore's *countenance falls: he turns away abruptly from* Truebridge, *and walks up and down in disorder.*)

Mrs. B. (*perceiving* Freeman's *hat on the ground, which he had dropt in his confusion.*) Mr. Freeman has left his hat behind him. (*As she stoops to lift it,* Balt. *runs furiously up to her and prevents her.*)

Balt. Touch not the damned thing, or I will loath thee! Who waits without? hollo! Turnkey!

Enter Turnkey; and he, giving the hat a kick with his foot, tosses it across the stage.

Take away that abomination, do!

[Exit *hastily into an inner apartment.*

True. Don't lose hopes of fair weather, my dear Madam, tho' we are now in the midst of the storm. Follow and soothe him, if it be possible, and I'll go in the mean time to Freeman. [Exeunt, *severally.*

Scene III.—An open scattered street in a country town.

Enter Jenkinson and Servet by opposite sides; and are going to pass without observing one another.

Serv. (*calling to* Jenk.) Not so fast, Mr. Jenkinson; I was just going to your house.

Jenk. And I was just going to do myself the pleasure to call at your's.

Serv. And you was glad to go quickly along, I believe. It would neither be pleasant nor safe for you, perhaps, to meet the new member in his chair, with all his friends round him. "Baltimore for ever!" would not sound so very pleasantly in your ears. Ay, Mr. Jenkinson! You have made a fine hand of this business for a man of your pretensions in the profession.

Jenk. I believe, Mr. Servet, I may be permitted to assume to myself, without the imputation of vanity, as much professional dexterity in this affair as the most able of my contemporaries could have brought into the service. Every thing has been done that the very nicest manœuvres of the law would admit of. Who could have thought of a rich friend, from nobody knows where, paying Baltimore's debts for him? Who could have

thought of those fools taking him up so warmly upon his imprisonment, in manifest contradiction to the old proverb, that "rats and vermin leave a falling house?" Who could have thought so many of Mr. Freeman's friends would have stay'd from the poll, too, after solemnly promising their votes? I am sure you are too polite not to do me the justice to confess that these things were not to be counted upon. A pinch of your snuff, if you please: you keep the best rappee of any gentleman in the county.

Serv. But what can you say for yourself in the present business, Mr. Jenkinson? I'm sure, my client, Mr. Baltimore, has given you advantages enough, if you had known how to use them. Since his quarrel with Mr. Freeman in the prison, have not you and I gone between them with at least half-a-dozen of messages, unknown to their friends? and nothing but a paltry meeting with pistols to come of it after all! It is a disgrace to the profession.

Jenk. What could I have done, Mr. Servet?

Serv. What could you have done! Has not my client by my mouth, told your client in pretty plain terms, in return to all his amicable advances, that he is a liar, and a hypocrite, and a knave, and a coward; and with but very little difficulty on your part a kick or a cudgel might have been added: and do you ask me what was to be done with all this? A meeting with pistols, indeed! It is a disgrace to the profession. I once procured for a smug-faced client of mine a good douse o'the chops, which put a couple of hundred pounds into his pocket; enabled him thereby to run off with a rich heiress, and make his fortune, as you may well say, by a stroke. As for myself, I put, of course, double the sum into my own.

Jenk. Do me the favour to believe, my worthy Sir, that I have always looked up to your superiour abilities with the profoundest respect. But have a little patience: and do me the honour to suppose I am not altogether a novice. We may have a duel first and a law-suit afterwards. I suppose we shall have the pleasure of meeting at the place and hour appointed?

Serv. Never doubt that. But I hear the crowd coming this way. (*some of the crowd begin to enter, and a great noise is heard at a distance.*) Let us avoid them, and talk further of this matter as we go. [Exeunt Jenk. *and* Serv.

Enter more of the Crowd.

First Mob. Well, I can't say but it was a rare speech.

Second Mob. And very nicely delivered.

First Mob. Ay, he is a nice man.

First Woman. And such a sweet-faced gentleman. He'll stand by his king and country, I warrant ye.

First Mob. (*to* third Mob.) But you lost it all, neighbour Brown, you was so long of coming. "Gentlemen!" said he, and he bowed his head so, "the honour you have this day preferred me to"—

Second Mob. No, no, man; "that you have conferred upon me."

First Mob. Well, well, where's the difference? "I shall ever consider upon."——

Second Mob. Reflect upon.

First Mob. Did not I say "reflect upon? With—with great joy;" no "great"—I don't know very well; but he meant, as one should say, as how he would think upon us with good-will. And then, quoth he—but first of all you know, he said, stretching out his hand so, that "the confidence imputed to him."

Second Mob. Tut, man! reposed upon him.

First Mob. Did not I say so as plain as a man could speak?—Was a trust that, with the greatest scrupulousness of regard—That is to say, you know, that he won't sell his vote for a pension: nor give away our poor little earnings to feed a parcel of lazy placemen and courtiers, Lord help us! And that he won't do.

Third Mob. No, no! I'll answer for him. Why, I have heel-pieced his shoes for him when he was no bigger than a quart-pot.

First Mob. But what pleased me most of all was, when he waved his hands in this fashion, and said, "Gentlemen, it has always been the pride and boasting——

Second Mob. Pride and boast.

First Mob. No, indeed; I say pride and boasting, Thomas Truepenny; have not I a pair of ears in my head as well as you?

Second Mob. Well, well, boasting be it then!

First Mob. Yes, "boasting of this honourable borough to support its own dignity and independency against all corruptful encroachments." And then he went on to tell us, you know, all about the glory and braveness of our ancestors—O! let him alone for a speech! I'll warrant ye, when he stands up among the great men in that there house of parliament, he'll set his words together in as good a fashion as the best of them.

Second Mob. Yes, to be sure, if he does it in the fashion that you have been a-shewing us.

Second Woman. O la! there he comes, and the pretty chair and all the pretty ribbons flying about! Do come and let us run after him.

(Enter a great crowd, and Baltimore carried in a chair ornamented with boughs and ribbons, &c. on the back ground, and crossing over the bottom of the stage Exeunt with acclamations: the first crowd joining them.)

Scene IV.—An open space in a forest surrounded with thickets and fern, &c.

Enter Baltimore and Servet, looking out several ways as they enter.

Serv. Now I do see them a-coming!

Balt. You have discovered them half-a-dozen of times already since we entered the forest: Are they at hand?

Serv. (*still looking out thro' some bushes.*) They an't far off, but I don't know how it is, they keep always a-moving, and always a-moving, and yet they never come nearer.

Balt. He stops to take heart, perhaps. (*smiling with malicious satisfaction.*)

Serv. Yes, poor man, ha, ha, ha! his mind is disturb'd enough, no doubt. But you, Sir, are so composed! You have the true strong nerves of a gentleman. Good blood always shows itself upon these occasions. (*looking out again.*) Yonder now, I could tell you, even at this distance, by that very manner of waving his pocket handkerchief, that he is in a devilish quandary.

Balt. Indeed! dost thou already discover in him the disturbed gait of a frightened man? This is excellent!—Let me look! let me look! (*looking thro' the bushes with great satisfaction and eagerness.*) Where, Servet?

Serv. Look just between the birch-tree and the little gate.

Balt. (*peevishly.*) Pooh, nonsense! It is a colt feeding among the bushes, and lashing off the flies with his tail.

As they are looking, enter Freeman and Jenkinson behind them.

Free. Good morning, gentlemen: I hope we have not kept you waiting.

Balt. I am here, Sir, at your request, to give you the satisfaction you require, and I have waited your time without impatience.

Free. Ah, Mr. Baltimore! it is a cruel necessity that has compell'd me to require such a meeting as this from a man to whom I owe my life. But life, with contempt and degradation in the eye of the world annexed to it, is no benefit: you have cruelly compell'd me—

Balt. Make no apology, Sir, for the invitation you have given me to this place: it is the only one in my life that I have received from you with pleasure, and obey'd with alacrity.

Free. You will regret, perhaps, when it is too late, that some explanation, on your part, did not prevent——

Jenk. Yes, Sir, some little explanation of your words. The most honourable gentleman is always free to confess that words are not always intended to convey the meaning they may obviously seem to express.

Balt. (*contemptuously.*) I make no doubt, Sir, that you can find a great many different meanings to the same words. A lie may be easily turn'd into a slight mistake, or a villain into a gentleman of deep and ingenious resource, in your polite dictionary: but I am a plain, unpolish'd man, Mr. Jenkinson, and I have but one sense in which I offer what I have said by the mouth of my friend here (*pointing to* Serv.) to Mr. Freeman, and to the world, unretracted and unexplain'd. (*aside to* Serv.) Does he not look pale?

Serv. O, very pale.

Free. Then, Mr. Baltimore, you compel a man of peace to be what he abhors.

Balt. I am sorry, Sir, this business is so disagreeable to you: the sooner we despatch it, in that case, the better. Take your ground. (*aside to* Serv.) Does he not look very pale?

Serv. (*aside.*) O, as white as a corpse.

Free. I believe you are right (*to* Serv. *and* Jenk.) Mark out the distance, gentlemen: you know what is generally done upon these occasions. I am altogether ignorant. You seem to be ready, Mr. Baltimore, and so am I.

Serv. (*aside to* Balt.) He would bully it out now, but he is in a great quandary for all that.

Balt. (*aside to* Serv. *angrily.*) No, hang him, he is as firm as a rock! (*aloud to* Free.) I am perfectly ready also, Sir. Now take your fire.

Free. No; I cannot call you out, and take the first fire myself: this does not appear to me reasonable.

Balt. You are the insulted man.

Free. Yes, but I am the challenger, and must insist on first receiving your's.

(*They take their ground, and* Balt. *is about to fire, when* Truebridge *and* Charles Baltimore, *break in upon them through the bushes.*)

True. (*seizing* Baltimore's *arm.*) Hold your rash hand, madman, and make not yourself accursed!

Balt. What do you mean, Truebridge?

True. (*pointing to* Free.) That there stands before you the unknown friend——

Free. (*to* True. *eagerly.*) Hold! hold! remember your promise: I have bound you to it.

True. But you release me from that promise by effecting this meeting unknown to me, when I had every claim upon your confidence. I will not hold my tongue.

Balt. For God's sake, then, tell the worst thou hast got to say, for I am distracted!

True. There stands before you, then, that unknown friend; the great uncle of your wife, as I suffered you to suspect, who has paid all your debts, open'd your prison doors, and even kept back his own friends from the poll to make you the member of Westown. (Balt. *staggers back some paces, and the pistol falls from his hand.*)

Char. (*capering with joy.*) O, brave and noble! this makes a man's heart jump to his mouth! Come here, Mr. Spitfire, (*taking up the pistol.*) we shall have no more occasion for you.

Balt. (*giving* Charles *an angry push as he stoops down close by him to lift the pistol.*) Get away, damn'd fool! Does this make you happy?

True. Fie, Baltimore! It is not manly in thee to be thus overcome.

Balt. If thou had'st lodged a bullet in my brain, I had thank'd thee for it.

True. And is there nothing, then, within your breast that is generously called forth to meet the noble gratitude of a liberal mind?

A mind which has strove to acquit itself of the obligation that it owes to you, and to make you ample reparation for an injury which you have suffered on his account, tho' entirely unknown to him. There is nothing in your breast that comes forth to meet such sentiments as these. Injuries and oppression are pleasing to your mind; generosity and gratitude oppress it. Are these the feelings of a brave man? Come, come! (*taking his arm gently.*)

Balt. Hold away! I am fool'd, and depress'd, and degraded! (*turns away from him abruptly.*)

True. Well, then, battle out with your own proud spirit the best way you can. Freeman, I must agree to it, is a magnificent, boasting, ostentatious fellow; and devil take me if I could bear to have any reciprocity in good offices with him myself!

Balt. By the Lord! Truebridge, I'll run you thro' the body if you say that again.

True. Ha! come nearer to me then. I shall now tell Freeman of an obligation he owes to you, Baltimore, and we shall see if he bears it more graciously.

Free. I owe my life to his courage.

True. Yes, but it is not that. Come nearer me, Baltimore. (*to* Free.) You were anxious, I believe, to erect a monument to the memory of your father.

Free. Yes, Sir; and Mr. Jenkinson has written for me to have it accomplish'd.

True. And also, at the same time, to have a certificate of your baptism?

Free. Yes, Sir, some family business required it; but I have yet received no answer.

True. No; the clergyman to whom you wrote is my particular friend; he has made the inquiries you desired; and the result is of such a nature he has thought it necessary to be the bearer of it himself.

Free. What may it be?

True. He is at my house, and will inform you of every thing minutely; but, just at this moment, I can't help telling you myself, that to erect a monument to the memory of your father is unnecessary, as Mr. Baltimore has already piously saved you that trouble.

Free. What do you mean by that? I am a man of peace, but I will tear the heart out of any one who dares to insult my father's memory.

True. He has done it in sober piety.

Free. What! erected a monument for my father in the parish church of Southerndown?

True. No, in the parish church of Westown.

Free. My father is not buried there.

True. Ay, but he is, indeed. One church, one grave, one coffin contains both your father and his.

Free. O, God! what is this? (Balt. *starts and puts his hands before his eyes.*)

Char. I would give a thousand pounds that this were true.

True. (*to* Char.) Thou hast lost thy money, then. But prithee be quiet, Charles! (Jenkison *and* Servet *look ruefully upon one another.*)

Free. (*after a pause.*) Was not my mother the wife of Freeman?

True. Yes; and, I believe, his faithful wife; but she was your mother first.

Free. She was seduced and betray'd?

True. We will not, if you please, enter into that part of the story at present. My account says, that she married, after bringing you into the world, a poor but honest man: that the late Mrs. Baltimore discovered her some years afterwards, sympathised with her misfortune, and from her own pin-money, for the family affairs were even then very much involved, paid her a yearly sum for the support and education of her son, which laid the foundation of his future wealth and prosperity.

Balt. (*stepping forward with emotion.*) Did my mother do this?

True. Yes, Baltimore, she did; till Mrs. Freeman, inform'd of the state of your father's affairs, with an industry that defied all pain and weariness, toil'd day and night to support the aspiring views of her son, independent of a bounty which she would no longer receive, tho' it was often and warmly press'd upon her.

Free. (*with emotion.*) And did my mother do that?

True. She did, indeed.

Free. Then God bless her! I do not blush to call myself her son.

True. (*stretching out his hands to* Balt. *and* Free.) Now, don't think that I am going to whine to you about natural affection, and fraternal love, and such weaknesses. I know that you have lived in the constant practice of all manner of opposition and provocation towards one another for some time past: you have exercised your tempers thereby, and have acquired habits that are now, perhaps, necessary for you. Far be it from me to break in upon habits and gratifications! Only, as you are both the sons of one father, who now lies quietly in his grave, and of the good women, for I call them both good, who bore no enmity to one another, tho' placed in a situation very favourable for its growth, do for the love of decency take one another by the hand, and live peaceably and respectably together! (*taking each of them by the hand.*)

Balt. (*shaking off* True.) Get away, Truebridge, and leave us to ourselves.

(True. *retires to the bottom of the stage, and makes signs for* Jenk. Serv. *and* Char. *to do so too: they all retire.*)

(Balt. *and* Free. *stand looking at one another for some time without speaking.* Balt. *then drawing nearer to* Free. *clears his voice, and puts on the action of one who is going to speak emphatically; but his energy is suddenly dropt, and he turns away without speaking. He draws near him a second time, clears his voice again, and speaks in broken accents.*)

Balt. I have been to you, Mr. Freeman, most unreasonable and unjust. I have—I have—my behaviour has been stern and un-

gracious—But—but my heart—O! it has offended beyond—beyond even the forgiveness of a—of –

Free. (*eagerly.*) Of a what, Mr. Baltimore?

Balt. Of a brother.

Free. God bless you for that word! Are you the first to pronounce it? Yes, I will be a brother, and a father, and a friend, and an every thing to you, as long as there is breath in my body. And tho' we do not embrace as brothers———

Balt. (*rushing into his arms.*) Ah! but we do! we do! most heartily! But I have something to say. Let me lean against this tree for a little. (*leans his back against a tree.*)

Free. What would you say?

Balt. (*in a broken voice.*) I am—I am where I ought not to be. Your generosity imposed upon you—the borough of Westown is vacant.

Free. No; it is filled with the man for whom I will henceforth canvass thro' thick and thin every shire, town, and village in the kingdom, if need be: the borough of Westown is not vacant.

Balt. (*endeavouring to open his waistcoat and collar.*) My buttons are tight over my breast: I can't get this thing from my throat. (Free. *attempts to assist him.*)

True. (*running forward from the bottom of the stage.*) Let me assist you, Baltimore.

Balt. No, no, hold away: he will do it for me. I feel the touch of a brother's hand near my breast, and it does me good.

True. (*exulting.*) Ha! is it thus with you? Then we have triumphed! conquest and victory!

Char. (*tossing up his hat in the air.*) Conquest and triumph and victory! O it is all right now!

True. Yes, Charles, thou may'st now be as boisterous as thou wilt.

Jenk. (*aside to* Serv.) We have made but a bad business of it here.

Ser. (*aside to* Jenk.) it was all your fault. (*they quarrel in a corner, whilst* Free. *and* True. *are occupied with* Balt.; *and* Charles *runs exultingly about, tossing his hat in the air.*)

Enter nearly at the same time, by opposite sides, Mrs. Baltimore and Mrs. Freeman, with Charlotte.

Mrs. B. (*alarmed.*) O, you are wounded, Baltimore.

True. No, no! there are no wounds here: we are victorious.

Mrs. B. Over whom?

True. Over a whole legion of devils! or, at least, over one great black one, who was as strong and as stubborn as a whole legion.

Mrs. B. (*joyfully.*) Ha! and is he overcome at last? Let me rejoice with you, my Baltimore! We have found our lost happiness again!

Balt. We have found something more, my dear Isabella: we have found a brother. (*presenting* Free. *to* Mrs. B.)

Mrs. B. Yes, I knew you would find in this worthy man a friend and a brother.

Balt. Nay, nay! you don't catch my meaning: he is the son of my father.

Mrs. F. What does he say?

Char. The son of his father! My ears are ringing.

Mrs. B. (*after a pause of surprise.*) In sober earnest truth? (*clasping her hands together.*) O thank heaven for it! (*holding out her hand to* Free.) My friend and my brother.

Balt. (*to* Free.) Yes, she has always been your friend.

Free. (*kissing her hand with emotion.*) I know she has, and I have not been ungrateful. (*presenting* Mrs. Free. *to* Mrs. B. *and* Balt.) And here is one who has not been so much your friend as she will be. Her too warm interest in a husband's success misled her into an error which she sincerely repents.

Mrs. F. (*affectedly.*) Mrs. Baltimore has too much sensibility herself not to pardon the errors it occasions in others.

Mrs. B. (*taking her hand.*) Be assured, my dear madam, I can remember nothing with resentment that is connected with our present happiness.

Serv. (*aside to* Jenk.) And Mrs. Freeman is shaking hands with them too! O! there will be a stagnation to all activity! there will not be a lawsuit in the parish for a century to come!

Jenk. (*aside.*) Well, how could I help it? Walk this way, for God's sake, or they will hear us.

(Jenk. *and* Ser. *retire to the bottom of the stage quarrelling.*)

Mrs. B. (*looking round.*) But there is something wanting for me still: My dear Charlotte—

Charl. (*coming forward and jumping into* Mrs. B's *arms.*) Yes, I was just waiting for this. O! I shall love you, and live with you, and hang about you continually! My sister, my aunty, my cousin! how many names may I call you?

Mrs. B. As many as you please. But there is another name that you must learn to say: (*leading her up to* Balt.) do you think you can look gravely in this gentleman's face and call him uncle? Nay, don't be frightened at him. (*to* Balt.) Poor girl, she has stood in awe of you intolerably.

Balt. (*embracing her.*) She shall stand in awe of me no more; and, if ever I look sternly upon her again, I will cheerfully submit to whatever correction she may think proper to inflict upon me. (*smiling significantly.*)

Char. (*holding out his hand to* Charlotte And is there no such thing as cousins to be made out of all this store of relationship?

Charl. O yes! there is a lazy, idle, good-for-nothing thing called a cousin, that we must all have some little kindness for, as in duty bound, notwithstanding.

Free. Don't mind her, my friend Charles: you shall be lazy and idle no longer. I'll find

employment for you: I'll rouse you up and make a man of you. There is not a peer of the realm has it in his power to do more for his relations than I have. And by heaven I will do it too.

True. (*laying his hand on* Freeman's *shoulder.*) Gently now, my good Sir! we know all that perfectly well.

Balt. (*aside to* True.) O, let him boast now, he is entitled to it.

True. (*aside to* Balt. *giving a nod of satisfaction.*) Ay, all is well, I see. (*aloud.*) Now, my happy friends, if I have been of any use amongst you, shew me your gratitude by spending the rest of the day at my house, with my good friend the Vicar of Blackmorton; who has many things to tell you.

Mrs. Free. (*aside to* True.) As I am the elder brother's wife, the foolish ceremony of my taking precedence of Mrs. Baltimore will be settled accordingly; and I'm sure it will distress me extremely.

True. (*aside to her.*) Don't distress yourself, Madam; there is a bar to that, which you shall have the satisfaction of being acquainted with presently. Pray don't let your amiable delicacy distress you. (*aloud.*) Now let us leave this happy nook But I am resolved to have a little bower erected in this very spot, where we will all sometimes retire, whenever we find any bad dispositions stirring within us, with that book in our hands, which says "If thy brother offend thee seven times in a day"— No, no, no! I must not repeat sacred words with an unlicensed tongue: but I will bless God in silence for restoring a rational creature to the kindly feelings of humanity. [Exeunt.

ETHWALD: A TRAGEDY.

PART FIRST.

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

MEN.

Oswal, *king of Mercia.*
Edward, *his nephew, and ethling or heir to the crown.*
Seagurth, *father to* Edward.
Ethwald.
Ethelbert, *a noble Thane.*
Selred, *elder brother to* Ethwald.
Mollo, *father to* Ethwald, *a Thane of small consideration.*
Hexulf, *a bigoted bishop.*
Alwy, *an artful adventurer.*
Woggarwolfe, *a rude marauding Thane.*
Ongar, *a creature of* Alwy's.
Mystics and Mystic Sisters, supposed to be successors of the Druidical Diviners; Soldiers, Attendants, &c.

WOMEN.

Elburga, *daughter to king* Oswal.
Bertha, *attached to* Ethwald.
Sigurtha, *mother to* Bertha, *and niece to* Mollo, *living in his castle with her daughter, as part of his family.*
Dwina, *attendant on* Elburga.
Ladies, Attendants, and female Druids.

The Scene is supposed to be in England, *in the kingdom of* Mercia, *and the time near the end of the Heptarchy.*

ACT I.

Scene I.—the court of a saxon castle.

Ethwald is discovered lying upon the ground as if half asleep. The sound of a horn is heard without, at which he raises his head a little, and lays it down again. The gate of the castle opens at the bottom of the stage, and enter Selred, Ethelbert, and attendants, as if returning from hunting. Sel. and Eth. walk forward to the front, and the others retire by different sides of the stage.

Sel. This morning's sport hath bravely paid our toil.
Have not my dogs done credit to their breed?
Eth. I grant they have.
Sel. Mark'd you that tawny hound,
With stretched nostrils snuffing to the ground,
Who still before, with animating yell,
Like the brave leader of a warlike band,
Thro' many a mazy track his comrades led
In the right tainted path?
I would not for the weirgelt of a Thane
That noble creature barter.
Eth. I do not mean to tempt thee with the sum.
See'st thou where Ethwald, like a cottage cur
On dunghill stretch'd, half sleeping, half awake,
Doth bask his lazy carcass in the sun?
Ho! lagger there! (*to* Ethw. *who just raises his head and lays it down again.*
Eth. *going up close to him.*
When slowly from the plains and nether woods
With all their winding streams and hamlets brown,
Updrawn, the morning vapour lifts its veil,
And thro' its fleecy folds, with soften'd rays,
Like a still'd infant smiling in his tears,
Looks thro' the early sun:—when from afar
The gleaming lake betrays its wide expanse,
And, lightly curling on the dewy air,
The cottage smoke doth wind its path to heaven:
When larks sing shrill, and village cocks do crow,
And lows the heifer loosen'd from her stall:
When heaven's soft breath plays on the woodman's brow,
And ev'ry hair bell and wild tangled flower
Smells sweetly from its cage of checker'd dew:
Ay, and when huntsmen wind the merry horn,
And from its covert starts the fearful prey;
Who, warm'd with youth's blood in his swelling veins,
Would, like a lifeless clod, outstretch'd lie,
Shut up from all the fair creation offers?
(Eth. *yawns and heeds him not.*) He heeds me not.
Sel. I will assail him now. (*in a louder voice.*)
Ho! foxes heads our huntsman's belt adorn,
Who have, thro' tangled woods and ferny moors,
With many wiles shaped out their mazy flight;
Have swam deep floods, and from the rocky brows
Of frightful precipices boldly leap'd
Into the gulph below.
Nay, e'en our lesser game hath nobly done:
Across his shoulders hang four furred feet,
That hath full twenty miles before us run
In little space. O, it was glorious!
Ethw. (*raising his head carelessly.*)
Well, well, I know that hares will swiftly run

When dogs pursue them. (*stretches himself and goes to rest again.*)

Eth. Leave him to rest, he is not to be rous'd.

Sel. Well, be it so. By heaven, my fretted soul
Did something of this easy stupor lack,
When near the easy limits of our chace
I pass'd the frowning tower of Ruthergeld!
He hangs a helmet o'er his battlements,
As tho' he were the chief protecting Thane
Of all the country round.
I'll teach th' ennobled Coerl, within these bounds,
None may pretend in noble birth to vie
With Mollo's honour'd line!

Eth. (*proudly.*) Hast thou forgot?
Or did'st thou never hear whose blood it is
That fills these swelling veins?

Sel. I cry you mercy, Thane: I little doubt
Some brave man was the founder of your house.

Eth. Yes; such an one, at mention of whose name
The brave descendants of two hundred years
Have stately rose with more majestic step,
And proudly smiled.

Ed. Who was this lordly chieftain?

Eth. A Swabian shepherd's son, who, in dark times,
When ruin dire menaced his native land,
With all his native lordship in his grasp,
A simple maple spear and osier shield,
Making of keen and deep sagacity,
With daring courage and exalted thoughts,
A plain and native warrant of command,
Around him gather'd all the valiant youth;
And, after many a gallant enterprize,
Repell'd the foe, and gave his country peace.
His grateful country bless'd him for the gift,
And offer'd to his worth the regal crown.

Sel. (*bowing respectfully.*) I yield me to thy claim.

(Ethwald, *who has raised himself up by degrees upon hearing the story, and listen'd eagerly, now starts up, impatient of the pause, and catches* Eth. *by the arm.*)

Ethw. And did they crown him then?

Eth. No; with a mind above all selfish wrong,
He gen'rously the splendid gift refused:
And drawing from his distant low retreat
The only remnant of the royal race,
Did fix him firmly on his father's seat;
Proving until his very latest breath
A true and loyal subject.

Ethwald's *countenance changes, then turning from* Eth. *he slowly retires to the bottom of the stage and* Exit. Eth. *follows him attentively with his eye as he retires.*

Eth. Mark'd you the changes of the stripling's eye?
You do complain that he of late has grown
A musing sluggard. Selred, mark me well:
Brooding in secret, grows within his breast
That which no kindred owns to sloth or ease.
And is your father fix'd to keep him pent
Still here at home? Doth the old wizard's prophecy,
That the destruction of his noble line
Should from the valour of his youngest son,
In royal warfare, spring, still haunt his mind?
This close confinement makes the pining youth
More eager to be free.

Sel. Nay, rather say, the lore he had from thee
Hath o'er him cast this sullen gloom. Ere this,
Where was the fiercest courser of our stalls
That did not shortly under him become
As gentle as the lamb? What bow so stiff
But he would urge and strain his youthful strength,
Till ev'ry sinew o'er his body rose,
Like to the sooty forger's swelling arm,
Until it bent to him? What flood so deep
That on its foaming waves he would not throw
His naked breast, and beat each curling surge,
Until he gain'd the far opposing shore?
But since he learnt from thee that letter'd art,
Which only sacred priests were meant to know,
See how it is, I pray! His father's house
Has unto him become a cheerless den.
His pleasant tales and sprightly playful talk,
Which still our social meals were wont to cheer,
Now visit us but like a hasty beam
Between the showery clouds. Nay, e'en the maid,
My careful father destines for his bride,
That he may still retain him here at home,
Fair as she is, receives, when she appears,
His cold and cheerless smile.
Surely thy penanced pilgrimage to Rome,
And the displeasure of our holy saint,
Might well have taught thee that such sacred art
Was good for priests alone. Thou'st spoilt the youth.

Eth. I've spoilt the youth! What think'st thou then of me?

Sel. I'll not believe that thou at dead of night
Unto dark spirits say'st unholy rhymes;
Nor that the torch, on holy altars burnt,
Sinks into smoth'ring smoke at thy approach;
Nor that foul fiends about thy castle yell,
What time the darken'd earth is rock'd with storms;
Tho' many do such frightful credence hold,
And sign themselves when thou dost cross their way.
I do not believe——

Eth. By the bless'd light of heaven;—

Sel. I cannot think——

Eth By this well-proved sword!

Sel. Patience, good Thane! I meant to speak thy praise.

Eth. My praise, say'st thou?

Sel. Thy praise. I would have said,
"That he who in the field so oft hath fought,
So bravely fought, and still in the honour'd cause,
Should hold unhallow'd league with damned sprites,
I never will believe." Yet much I grieve
That thou, with bold intrusive forwardness,
Hast enter'd into that which holy men
Hold sacred for themselves;
And that thou hast, with little prudence too,
Entrapp'd my brother with this wicked lore,
Altho' methinks thou did'st not mean him harm.

Eth. I thank thee, Selred; listen now to me,
And thou shalt hear a plain and simple tale,
As true as it is artless.
These cunning priests full loudly blast my fame,
Because that I with diligence and cost,
Have got myself instructed how to read
Our sacred scriptures, which, they would maintain,
No eye profane may dare to violate.
If I am wrong, they have themselves to blame.
It was their hard extortions first impell'd me
To search that precious book, from which they draw
Their right, as they pretend, to lord it thus.
But what think'st thou, my Selred, read I there?
Of one sent down from heav'n in sov'reign pomp,
To give into the hands of leagued priests
All power to hold th' immortal soul of man
In everlasting thraldom? O far otherwise!
(*taking* Selred's *hand with great earnestness.*)
Of one who health restored unto the sick,
Who made the lame to walk, the blind to see,
Who fed the hungry, and who rais'd the dead,
Yet had no place wherein to lay his head.
Of one from ev'ry spot of tainting sin
Holy and pure; and yet so lenient,
That he with soft and unupbraiding love
Did woo the wand'ring sinner from his ways,
As doth the elder brother of a house
The erring stripling guide. Of one, my friend,
Wiser by far than all the sons of men,
Yet teaching ignorance in simple speech,
As thou would'st take an infant on thy lap
And lesson him with his own artless tale.
Of one so mighty .
That he did say unto the raging sea
"Be thou at peace," and it obey'd his voice;
Yet bow'd himself unto the painful death
That we might live.—They say that I am proud—
O! had they like their gentle master been!
I would, with suppliant knee bent to the ground,
Have kiss'd their very feet.
But, had they been like him, they would have pardon'd me
Ere yet my bending knee hath touch'd the earth.

Sel. Forbear, nor tempt me with thy moving words!
I'm a plain soldier, and unfit to judge
Of mysteries which but concern the learn'd.

Eth. I know thou art, nor do I mean to tempt thee.
But in thy younger brother I had mark'd
A searching mind of freer exercise,
Untrammell'd with the thoughts of other men;
And like to one, who, in a gloomy night,
Watching alone amidst a sleeping host,
Sees suddenly along the darken'd sky
Some beauteous meteor play, and with his hand
Wakens a kindred sleeper by his side
To see the glorious sight, e'en so did I.
With pains and cost I divers books procured,
Telling of wars, and arms, and famous men;
Thinking it would his young attention rouse;
Would combat best a learner's difficulty,
And pave the way at length for better things.
But here his seized soul has wrapp'd itself,
And from the means is heedless of the end.
If wrong I've done, I do repent me of it.
And now, good Selred, as thou'st seen me fight
Like a brave chief, and still in th' honour'd cause,
By that good token kindly think of me,
As of a man, who long has suffer'd wrong,
Rather than one deserving so to suffer.

Sel. I do, brave Ethelbert.

Eth. I thank thee, friend.
And now we'll go and wash us from this dust:
We are not fit at goodly boards to sit.
Is not your feast hour near?

Sel. I think it is. [Exeunt.

Scene II.—A small apartment in Mollo's castle.

Enter Ethwald very thoughtful, who leans against a pillar for some time without speaking.

Ethw. (*coming forward.*) Is it delusion this?
Or wears the mind of man within itself
A conscious feeling of its destination?
What say these suddenly imposed thoughts,
Which mark such deepen'd traces on the brain
Of vivid real persuasion, as do make
My nerved foot tread firmer on the earth,
And my dilating form tower on its way?
That I am born, within these narrow walls,
The younger brother of a petty chief,
To live my term in dark obscurity,
Until some foul disease or bloody gash,
In low marauding strife, shall lay me low?
My spirit sickens at the hateful thought!
It hangs upon it with such thick oppression,
As doth the heavy, dense, sulphureous air
Upon the breath it stifles. (*pulling up the sleeve of his garment, and baring his right arm from the shoulder.*)
A firmer strung, a stronger arm than this

Own'd ever valiant chief of ancient story?
And lacks my soul within, what should impel it?
Ah! but occasion, like th' unveiling moon
Which calls the advent'rer forth, did shine on them!
I sit i'the shade! no star-beam falls on me!!
(*Bursts into tears, and throws himself back against the pillar. A pause: he then starts forward full of animation, and tosses his arms high as he speaks.*)
No; storms are hush'd within their silent cave,
And unflesh'd lions slumber in the den,
But there doth come a time!

Enter BERTHA, stealing softly upon him before he is aware.

What, Bertha, is it thou who steal'st upon me?
Ber. I heard thee loud:
Conversest thou with spirits in the air?
Ethw. With those whose answ'ring voice thou can'st not hear.
Ber. Thou hast of late the friend of such become,
And only *they*. Thou art indeed so strange
Thy very dogs have ceased to follow thee,
For thou no more their fawning court receiv'st,
Nor callest to them with a master's voice.
What art thou grown, since thou hast lov'd to pore
Upon those magic books?
Ethw. No matter what! a hermit an' thou wilt.
Ber. Nay, rather, by thy high assumed gait
And lofty mien, which I have mark'd of late,
Oft times thou art, within thy mind's own world,
Some king or mighty chief.
If so it be, tell me thine honour's pitch,
And I will tuck my regal mantle on,
And mate thy dignity. (*assuming much state.*)
Ethw. Out on thy foolery!
Ber. Dost thou remember
How on our throne of turf, with birchen crowns
And willow branches waving in our hands,
We shook our careless feet, and caroll'd out,
And call'd ourselves the king and queen of Kent?
Ethw. Yes, children ever in their mimick play
Such fairy state assume.
Ber. And bearded men
Do sometimes gild the dull enchanting face
Of sombre stilly life with like conceits.
Come, an' you will we'll go to play again.
(*tripping gaily round him.*)
Ethw. Who sent thee here to gambol round me thus?
Ber. Nay, fie upon thee! for thou know'st right well
It is an errand of my own good will.
Knowest thou not the wand'ring clown is here
Who doth the osier wands and rushes weave
Into all shapes: who chants gay stories too;
And who was wont to tell thee, when a boy,
Of all the bloody wars of furious Penda?
E'en now he is at work before the gate,
With heaps of pliant rushes round him strew'd;
In which birds, dogs, and children roll and nestle,
Whilst, crouching by his side, with watchful eye
The playful kitten marks each trembling rush
As he entwists his many circling bands.
Nay, men and matrons, too, around him flock,
And Ethelbert, low seated on a stone,
With arms thus cross'd, o'erlooks his curious craft.
Wilt thou not come?
Ethw. Away, I care not for it!
Ber. Nay, do not shake thy head, for thou must come.
This magic girdle will compel thy steps.
(*throws a girdle round him playfully, and pulls it till it breaks.*
Ethw. (*smiling coldly.*) Thou see'st it cannot hold me. (Bertha's *face changes immediately: she bursts into tears, and turns away to conceal it.*)
Ethw. (*soothing her.*) My gentle Bertha! little foolish maid!
Why fall those tears? Wilt thou not look on me?
Dost thou not know I am a wayward man,
Sullen by fits, but meaning no unkindness?
Ber. O thou were wont to make the hall rejoice;
And cheer the gloomy face of dark December!
Ethw. And will, perhaps, again. Cheer up, my love! (*assuming a cheerful voice.*)
And plies the wand'ring clown his pleasing craft,
Whilst dogs and men and children round him flock?
Come, let us join them too. (*holding out his hand to her, whilst she smiles thro' her tears.*)
How course those glancing drops adown thy cheeks,
Like to a whimp'ring child! fie on thee, Bertha! (*wipes off her tears, and leads her out affectionately.*) [EXEUNT.

SCENE III.—A NARROW STONE GALLERY OR PASSAGE.

(*Voice without.*) Haste, lazy comrade, there!

Enter two SERVANTS by opposite sides, one of them carrying mats of rushes in his arms.

First Serv. Set'st thou thy feet thus softly to the ground,—
As if thou had'st been paid to count thy steps?
What made thee stay so long?
Second Serv. Heard you the news?
First Serv. The news?

Second Serv. Ay, by the mass! sharp news indeed.
And mark me well; beforehand I have said it;
Some of those spears now hanging in the hall
Will wag i' the field ere long.
First Serv. Thou hast a marv'llous gift of prophecy.
I know it well; but let us hear thy news.
Second Serv. Marry! the Britons and their restless prince,
Join'd with West Anglia's king, a goodly host,
Are now in Mercia, threat'ning all with ruin.
And over and besides, God save us all!
They are but five leagues off.
Tis true. And over and besides again,
Our king is on his way to give them battle.
Ay, and moreover all, if the late floods
Have broken down the bridge, as it is fear'd,
He must perforce pass by our castle walls,
And then thou shalt behold a goodly shew!
First Serv. Who brought the tidings?
Second Serv. A soldier sent on horseback all express:
E'en now I heard him tell it to the Thane,
Who cautioned me to tell it unto none,
That Ethwald might not hear it.
First Serv. And thou in sooth obey'st his caution well.
Now hear thou this from me: thou'art a lout;
And over and besides a babbling fool;
Ay, and moreover all, I'll break thy head
If thou dost tell again, in any wise,
The smallest tittle of it.
Second Serv. Marry! I can be as secret as thyself!
I tell not those who blab.
First Serv. Yes, yes, thy caution is most scrupulous;
Thou'lt whisper it in Ethwald's hither ear,
And bid the farther not to know of it.
Give me those trusses.
Second Serv. Yes, this is made for my old master's seat,
And this, so soft, for gentle lady Bertha. (*giv- the mats.*)
And this, and this, and this for Ethelbert.
But see thou put a sprig of mountain-ash
Benath it snugly. Dost thou understand?
First Serv. What is thy meaning?
Second Serv. It hath power to cross all wicked spells;
So that a man may sit next stool to th' devil,
If he can lay but slyly such a twig
Beneath his seat, nor suffer any harm.
First Serv. I wish there were some herb of secret power
To save from daily skaith of blund'ring fools:
I know beneath whose stool it should be press'd.
Get thee along! the feast smokes in the hall.
[EXEUNT.

SCENE IV. A SAXON HALL WITH THE WALLS HUNG ROUND WITH ARMOUR. MOLLO, ETHELBERT, SELRED, ETHWALD, BERTHA, SIGURTHA, AND OTHERS, ARE DISCOVERED SITTING ROUND A TABLE ON WHICH STAND GOBLETS AND FLAGGONS, &C. AFTER A FEAST.

Eth. Nay, gentle Bertha, if thou followest him,
Sheer of those lovely tresses from thy head,
And with a frowning helmet shade those eyes:
E'en with thy prowess added to his own,
Methinks he will not be surcharg'd of means
To earn his brilliant fortune in the field.
Ber. Nay, rather will I fill a little scrip
With sick-men's drugs and salves for fest'ring wounds,
And journey by his side, a trav'lling leech.
Sel. That will, indeed, no unmeet comrade be
For one whose fortune must be earn'd with blows
Borne by no substitutes.
Ethw. Well jested, Thanes!
But some, ere now, with fortune earn'd by blows
Borne by no substitutes, have placed their mates
Above the gorgeous dames of castled lords.
Cheer up, sweet Bertha!
For ev'ry drug ta'en from thy little scrip
I'll pay thee back with——
Eth. Sticks the word i' his throat.
Sel. It is too great for utt'rance.
Eth. Here's to your growing honours, future chief;
And here is to the lofty dame who shall be—
(*they all drink ironically to* Ethw. *and* Berth.)
Mollo. (*seriously.*) Here is a father's wish for thee, my son, (*to* Ethw.)
Better than all the glare of fleeting greatness.
Be thou at home the firm domestic prop
Of thine old father's house, in this as honour'd
As he who bears far hence advent'rous arms!
Nor think thee thus debarred from warlike deeds:
Our neighb'ring chiefs are not too peaceable,
And much adventure breed in little space.
Ethw. What! shall I in their low destructive strife
Put forth my strength, and earn with valiant deeds
The fair renown of mighty Woggarwolfe,
The flower of all those heroes? Hateful ruffian!
He drinks men's blood and human flesh devours!
For scarce a heifer on his pasture feeds
Which hath not cost a gallant warrior's life.
I cry you mercy, father! you are kind,
But I do lack the grace to thank you for it.
(Mollo *leans on the table and looks sad.*)
Sigur. (*to* Mol.) Good uncle, you are sad!
Our gen'rous Ethwald
Contemns not his domestic station here,
Tho' little willing to enrich your walls
With spoils of petty war.

Ethw. (*seeing his father sad, and assuming cheerfulness.*)
Nay, father, if your heart is set on spoil,
Let it be Woggarwolfe's that you shall covet,
And small persuasion may suffice to tempt me.
To plunder him will be no common gain.
We feasters love the flesh of well-run game:
And, faith! the meanest beeve of all his herds
Has hoof'd it o'er as many weary miles,
With goading pike-men hollowing at his heels,
As e'er the bravest antler of the woods.
His very muttons, too, are noble beasts,
For which contending warriors have fought;
And thrifty dames will find their fleece enrich'd
With the productions of full many a soil.
Ber. How so, my Ethwald?
Ethw. Countest thou for nought
Furze from the upland moors, and bearded down,
Torn from the thistles of the sandy plain?
The sharp-tooth'd bramble of the shaggy woods
And tufted seeds from the dark marsh? Good south;
She well may triumph in no vulgar skill
Who spins a coat from it.
And then his wardrobe, too, of costly geer,
Which from the wallets of a hundred thieves,
Has been transferring for a score of years,
In endless change, it will be noble spoil!
(*A trumpet is heard without, and* Ethw. *starts from his seat.*)
Ha! 'tis the trumpet's voice!
What royal leader this way shapes his route?
(*a silent pause.*)
Ye answer not, and yet ye seem to know.

Enter SERVANTS in haste.

Good fellows, what say ye?
First Serv. The king! the king! and with five thousand men!
Second Serv. I saw his banners from the battlements
Waving between the woods.
Third Serv. And so did I.
His spear-men onward move in dusky lines,
Like the brown reeds that skirt the winter pool.
Sel. Well, well, there needs not all this wond'ring din:
He passes on, and we shall do our part.
First Serv. The foe is three leagues off.
Sel. Hold thy fool's tongue! I want no information.
(Ethwald *remains for a while thoughtful, then, running eagerly to the end of the hall, climbs up and snatches from the walls a sword and shield, with which he is about to run out.*)
Mollo. (*tottering from his seat.*)
O go not forth, my rash impetuous son!
Stay yet a term beneath thy father's roof,
And, were it at the cost of half my lands,
I'll send thee out accoutred like a Thane.
Ethw. No, rev'rend sire, these be my patrimony!
I ask of thee no more,
Ber. And wilt thou leave us?
Mollo. Ay, he'll break thy heart,
And lay me in the dust! (*trumpet sounds again, and* Ethw. *turning hastily from them, runs out.*)
Ber. Oh! he is gone for ever!
Eth. Patience, sweet Bertha!
Sel. The castle gates are shut by my command,
He cannot now escape. Holla, good friends!
(*to those without.*)

Enter FOLLOWERS.

All quickly arm yourselves, and be prepared
To follow me before the fall of eve.
Eth. Send out my scout to climb the farther hill,
And spy if that my bands are yet in sight.
[EXEUNT *Followers.*
Now let us try to tame this lion's whelp.

Enter SERVANT in haste.

Sel. What tidings man? Is Ethwald at the gate?
Ser. No, good my Lord, nor yet within the walls.
Sel. What, have they open'd to him?
Ser. No, my Lord,
Loudly he call'd, but when it was refus'd,
With glaring eyes, like an enchafed wolf,
He hied him were the lowest southern wall
Rises but little o'er the rugged rock;
There, aided by a half projecting stone,
He scal'd its height, and holding o'er his head
His sword and shield, grasp'd in his better hand,
Swam the full moat.
Eth. (*to* Sel.) O, noble youth!
Did I not say, you might as well arrest
The fire of Heav'n within its pitchy cloud
As keep him here? (Bertha *faints away.*)
Alas, poor maid!
(Whilst SIGURTHA and ETH. &c. attend to BERTHA, enter followers and retainers, and begin to take down the armour from the walls. Enter WOGGARWOLFE.)
Wog. (*to* Sel.) They would have shut your gate upon me now,
But I, commission'd on the king's affairs,
Commanded entrance. Oswal greets you, chiefs,
And gives you orders, with your followers,
To join him speedily. (*seeing* Bertha.)
What, swooning women here?
Sel. Ethwald is gone in spite of all our care,
And she, thou know'st, my father's neice's child,
Brought up with him from early infancy,
Is therein much affected.
Wog. (*smiling.*) O, it is ever thus; I know it well,
When striplings are concerned! Once on a time,
A youthful chief I seized in his own hall,
When, on the instant, was the floor around

With fainting maids and shrieking matrons strew'd,
As tho' the end of all things had been link'd
Unto my fatal grasp.

Sel. (*eagerly.*) Thou didst not slay him?

Wog. (*smiling contemptuously.*) Ask Selred if I slew mine enemy?

Sel. Then, by heav'ns light, it was a ruffian's deed!

Wog. I cry thee grace! wear'st thou a virgin sword?
Maidens turn pale when they do look on blood,
And men there be who sicken at the sight,
If men they may be call'd.

Sel. Ay, men there be,
Who sicken at the sight of crimson butchery,
Yet in the battle's heat will far out-dare
A thousand shedders of unkindled blood.

Eth. (*coming forward.*) Peace, Thanes! this is no time for angry words.

(Bertha *giving a deep sigh*, Eth. *and* Sel. *go to her and leave* Wog. *who heeds her not, but looks at the men taking the arms from the walls.—Observing one who hesitates between the swords.*)

Wog. Fool, chose the other blade!
That weight of steel will noble gashes make!
Nay, rightly guided in a hand like thine,
Might cleave a man down to the nether ribs.

Sig. (*to* Bertha, *as she is recovering.*)
My gentle child, how art thou?

Ber. And no kind hand to hold him!

Eth. Be not cast down, sweet maid; he'll soon return;
All are not lost who join in chanceful war.

Ber. I know right well, good Thane, all are not lost.
The native children of rude jarring war.
Full oft returning from the field, become
Beneath their shading helmets aged men:
But ah, the kind, the playful, and the gay;
They who have gladden'd their domestic board,
And cheer'd the winter fire, do they return?
(*shaking her head sorrowfully.*)
I grieve you all: I will no more complain.
Dear mother, lead me hence. (*to* Sig.)
(*To* Sel.) I thank you, gentle Selred, this suffices.

[Exeunt Bertha, *supported by* Sigurtha.

Sel. (*to* Mollo *who has sat for some time with his face cover'd.*) What, so o'ercome, my father?

Moll. I am o'ercome, my son; lend me thine arm. [Exeunt.

ACT II.

Scene I.—A forest: the view of an abbey with its spires in the back ground.

Enter the King, attended by Seagurth and several Thanes and followers, some of them wounded, and their wounds bound up, as after a battle. A flourish of trumpets: the King stretches out his arm in the action of command; the trumpets cease, and they all halt.

King. Companions of this rough and bloody day,
Beneath the kindly shelter of this wood
A while repose, until our eager youth,
Shall, from the widely spread pursuit returned,
Rejoin our standards.
Brave Seneschal, thou'rt weak with the loss of blood;
Forbear attendance. Ay, and thou, good Baldrick:
And thou, (*to another*) and all of you.

Sen. No, gracious king;
The sight of you, unhurt, doth make the blood
That in our veins remains so kindly glow,
We cannot faint.

King. Thanks, noble chiefs! dear is the gain I earn,
Purchased with blood so precious. Who are those
Who thitherward in long procession move?

Sen. It is the pious brethren, as I guess,
Come forth to meet you from yon neighb'ring abbey,
And at their head the holy Hexulf comes.

Enter Hexulf and Monks.

Hex. Accept our humble greetings, royal sire!
Victorious be your arms! and in the dust
Low be your foes, as in this glorious day!
Favour'd of heav'n, and of St. Alban, hail!

King. I thank your kindly zeal, my rev'rend father;
And from these holy brethren do accept
With thanks this token of good will, not doubting
That much I am beholden to your prayers.

Hex. In truth, most gracious king, your armed host
Has not more surely in your cause prevail'd
Than hath our joint petition, offer'd up
With holy fervour, most importunate.
Soon as the heav'n-rais'd voices sweetly reach'd
The echoing arches of yon sacred roofs,
Saint Alban heard, and to your favour'd side
Courage and strength, the soul of battle, sent;
Fear and distraction to th' opposing foe.

King. Ah, then, good father, and ye pious monks!
Would that ye had begun your prayers the sooner!
For long in doubtful scales the battle hung;
And of the men who, with this morning's sun,
Buckled there harness on to follow me,
Full many a valiant warriour, on his back
Lies stiff'ning to the wind.

Hex. The wicked sprite in ev'ry armed host
Will find his friends; who doubtless for a time
May counterpoise the prayers of holy men.
There are among your troops, I question not,
Many who do our sacred rites contemn:
Many who have blasphem'd—Ay, good my Lord;

And many holding baleful heresies.
Fought Ethelbert, of Sexford, in your host?

King. He did, my rev'rend father, bravely fought:
To him and valiant Selred, Mollo's son,
Belong the second honours of the day.

(Hexulf *looks abash'd, and is silent.*)

Enter EDWARD attended, who, after making his obeisance to the KING, runs up eagerly to SEAGURTH.

Edw. You are not wounded, father?

Sea. No, my boy.

Edw. Thanks to preserving goodness! Noble Thanes,
It grieves me much to see those swathed limbs.
War wears a horrid, yet alluring face.
(*To* King.) Your friends, my Lord, have done me great despite.
Had they not long detain'd me on the way,
I should have been with you before the battle.

King. Complain not, youth; they had, in this, commands
Too high to be disputed. And 'tis well,
For we have had a rough and bloody day.

Edw. Ha! is it so? But you have been victorious.
How went the field?

Sea. Loud rose our battle's sound, and for a while
The Mercians bravely fought; when, all at once,
From some unlook'd-for cause, as yet unknown,
A powerful panic seiz'd our better wing,
Which, back recoiling, turn'd and basely fled.
Touch'd quickly with a seeming sympathy,
Our centre-force began, in laxed strength,
To yield contended space.—So stood the field;
When on a sudden, like those warriour spirits,
Whose scatter'd locks the streamy light'ning is,
Whose spear the bolt of heaven; such as the seer
In 'tranced gaze beholds midst hurtling storms,
Rush'd forth a youth unknown, and in a pass,
Narrow and steep, took his determin'd stand.
His beck'ning hand and loud commanding voice
Constrain'd our flying soldiers from behind,
And the sharp point of his opposing spear
Met the pale rout before.
The dark returning battle thicken'd round him:
Deeds of amazement wrought his mighty arm;
Rapid, resistless, terrible.
High rose each warlike bosom at the sight,
And Mercia, like a broad increasing wave,
Up swell'd into a hugely billow'd height,
O'erwhelming in its might all lesser things,
Upon the foe return'd. Selred and Ethelbert
Fell on their weaken'd flank. Confusion, then,
And rout and horrid slaughter fill'd the field:
Wide spread the keen pursuit; the day is ours;
Yet many a noble Mercian strews the plain.

Edw. (*eagerly*.) But the young hero fell not?

Sea. No, my son.

Edw. Then bless'd be Heav'n! there beats no noble heart
Which shall not henceforth love him as a brother.
Would he were come unhurt from the pursuit!
O that I had beheld him in his might,
When the dark battle turn'd!

Sea. Your wish is soon fulfill'd, my eager boy;
For here, in truth, the youthful warriour comes,
And, captive by his side, the British Prince.

Enter ETHWALD with the BRITISH PRINCE prisoner, accompanied by SELRED and ETHELBERT, and presents his prisoner to the KING.

King. (*to* Prince.) Prince of the Britons, clear thy cloudy brow;
The varied fate of war the bravest prove.
And tho' I might complain that thy aggressions
Have burnt my towns, and fill'd my land with blood,
Thy state forbids it. Here, good Seneschal,
Receive your charge, and let him know no change
Unsuited to a prince. (*To* Ethwald.)
And thou, brave warriour, whose youthful arm
Has brought unto thy king so high a gift,
Say, what proud man may lift his honour'd head,
And boast he is thy father.

Ethw. A Thane, my Lord, forgotten and retired:
I am the youngest son of aged Mollo,
And Ethwald is my name.

King. Youngest in years, tho' not in honour, youth,
E'en tho' the valiant Selred is thy brother.
(*turning to* Selred.)
And now be thou the first and noble root,
From which a noble race shall take its growth,
Wearing thy honours proudly!
Of Marnieth's earldom be thou the Lord!
For well I know the council of the states
Will not refuse to ratify my grant.
And thou, brave Ethelbert, and Selred, too,
Ye well have earn'd a noble recompense,
And shall not be forgot. Come hither, Edward;
Take thou this hero's hand; and, noble Ethwald,
Thus let the kingdom's ethling join with me
In honouring thy worth.
(Edward, *who has gazed at some distance upon* Ethwald, *springing forward eagerly.*)
Give him my hand, my Lord! have you not said
That I should fold him to my burning heart?
(*Embraces* Ethw.) Most valiant Ethwald,
Fain would I speak the thoughts I bear to thee,
But they do choke and flutter in my throat,
And make me like a child. (*passing his hand across his eyes.*)

Ethw. (*kissing* Edward's *hand.*) I am repaid beyond a kingdom's worth.

Edw. (*to* Sea. *bounding joyfully.*) Father, have you embraced him?
Ethwald, my father is a valiant man.
(Sea. *embraces* Ethw. *but not so eagerly as* Edw.)
King. (*to* Ethw.) Brave youth, with you, and with your noble friends,
I shall, ere long, have further conference.
(*retires to the bottom of the stage with* Hexulf.)
(Edward, *after gazing with admiration upon* Ethw. *puts his hand upon his head, as if to measure his height; then upon both his shoulders, as if he were considering the breadth of his chest; then steps some paces back, and gazes on him again.*)
Edw. How tall and strong thou art! broad is thy chest:
Stretch forth, I pray, that arm of mighty deeds.
(Ethw. *smiles and stretches out his arm;* Edw. *looks at it, and then at his own.*)
Would I were nerv'd like thee!
(*taking* Ethw's *sword.*) It is of weight to suit no vulgar arm.
(*Returning it.*) There, hero; graceful is the sword of war
In its bold master's grasp.
Ethw. Nay, good my Lord, if you will honour me,
It does too well your noble hand become
To be return'd to mine.
Edw. Ha! say'st thou so? Yes, I will keep thy pledge.
Perhaps my arm—Ah, no! it will not be!
But what returning token can I give?
I have bright spears and shields, and shining blades,
But nought ennobled by the owner's use.
(*Takes a bracelet from his arm, and fastens it round* Ethwald's.)
King. (*Advancing from the bottom of the stage.*)
My worthy chiefs and Thanes, the night wears on:
The rev'rend bishop, and these pious men,
Beneath their fane give hospitality,
And woo us to accept it for the night.
Sea. I thought, my Lord, you meant to pass the night
With your brave soldiers in the open field:
Already they have learnt the pleasing tale.
Shall I unsay it?
King. Nay, that were unfit.
I pray you pardon me, my rev'rend father!
I cannot house with you, it were unfit.
Hex. Should not your greatness spend the night with those
To whom, in truth, you owe the victory?
We chant at midnight to St. Alban's praise:
Surely my Lord regards those sacred things.
(*Whispers the* King.)
King. Brave Seagurth, there are reasons of good weight
Why I should lay aside my first intent.
Let all these wounded chieftains follow me:
The rest who list may keep the open field.
(*to* Edw.) Nephew, thou must not prove a soldier's hardships,
Ere thou hast earn'd a soldier's name. Nay, nay,
It must be so.
[Exeunt King, *wounded Chiefs*, Hexulf *and* Monks, *followed by* Edward *very unwillingly*.
Sea. Who loves a soldier's pillow, follow me. [Exeunt.

Scene II.—The outside of Mollo's castle. Bertha, Sigurtha, and others discovered on the walls, and several servants and retainers standing by the gate below.

Berth. O, will they ne'er appear? I'll look no more;
Mine eager gazing but retards their coming.
(*Retires, and immediately returns again.*)
Holla, good Murdoch! (*to a* Servant *below.*)
Thou putt'st thy hand above thy sunned eyes:
Dost thou descry them?
First Ser. Mercy, gentle Lady,
If you descry them not from that high perch,
How should I from my level station here?
Sig. (*to* Berth.) Go in, my child, thou art worn out with watching.
(Berth. *retires, and* 2d Servant *goes at some distance from the walls, and looks out another way.*)
Sec. Ser. Here comes the noble Selred.
(*All call out.*) Noble Selred!
Berth. (*returning upon the wall.*) What, Ethwald, say ye?
Sig. No, it is Selred.

Enter Selred with followers, and looks up to the walls, where Sigurtha waves her hand.

Sig. Welcome, brave Selred! welcome all thy band!
How far are they behind for whom we watch?
Sel. Two little miles or less. Methinks ere this
Their van should be in sight.
My messenger inform'd you?
Sig. Oh, he did!
Sel. Where is my father?
Sig. He rests within, spent with a fearful joy,
And silent tears steal down his furrow'd cheeks.
Sel. I must confer with him. The king intends
To stop and do him honour on his march,
But enters not our walls.
[Exeunt *into the castle.*

Scene III.—A chamber in the castle.

Enter Sigurtha and Bertha, speaking as they enter.

Berth. Nay, Mother, say not so: was he not wont,
If but returning from the daily chace,
To send an upward glance unto that tower?

There well he knew, or late or cold the hour,
His eye should find me.

Sig. My gentle Bertha, be not thus disturb'd.
Such busy scenes, such new unlook'd for things
Ruffle the flowing stream of habit; men
Will then forgetful seem, tho' not unkind.

Berth. Think'st thou? (*shaking her head.*)
I saw him by his sov'reign stand,
And O, how graceful! every eye to him
Was turn'd, and every face smil'd honours on him;
Yet his proud station quickly did he leave,
To greet his humbler friends who stood aloof.
The meanest follower of these walls, already,
Some mark of kind acknowledgment hath had—
He look'd not up—I am alone forgotten!

Sig. Be patient, child: he will not long delay
To seek thee in thy modest privacy;
Approving more to see thee here retired
Than, boldly to the army's eye exposed,
Greeting his first approach. I, the mean while,
Intrusted am with orders from the Thane,
Which must not be neglected. [Exit.

Berth. (*after walking up and down, agitated and frequently stopping to listen.*)
Ah no! deceiv'd again! I need not listen!
No bounding steps approach.
(*She sits down despondingly.*)

Enter Ethwald behind, and steals softly up to her.

Ethw. Bertha!

Berth. (*starting up.*) My Ethwald! (*he holds out his arms to her joyfully, and she bursts into tears.*)

Ethw. Thou dost not grieve that I am safe return'd?

Berth. O no! I do not grieve, yet I must weep.
Hast thou, in truth, been kind? I will not chide:
I cannot do it now.

Ethw. O, fie upon thee! like a wayward child
To look upon me thus! cheer up, my love.
(*He smiles upon her joyfully, and her countenance brightens. She then puts her hand upon his arm, and, stepping back a little space, surveys him with delight.*)

Berth. Thou man of mighty deeds!
Thou, whom the brave shall love, and princes honour!
Dost thou, in truth, return to me again,
Mine own, my very Ethwald?

Ethw. No, that were paltry: I return to thee
A thousand fold the lover thou hast known me.
I have, of late, been careless of thee, Bertha.
The hopeless calm of dull obscurity,
Like the thick vapours of a stagnant pool,
Oppress'd my heart, and smother'd kind affections;
But now th' enliv'ning breeze of fortune wakes
My torpid soul—When did I ever fold thee
To such a warm and bounding heart as this?
(*Embraces her.*)
The king has given me Mairnieth's earldom—
Nay, smile my Bertha!

Berth. So I do, my Ethwald.

Ethw. The noble ethling greatly honours me
With precious tokens: nay, the very soldiers
Do cock their pointed weapons as I pass;
As tho' it were to say, "there goes the man
That we would cheerly follow."
Unto what end these fair beginnings point
I know not—but of this I am assured,
There is a course of honour lies before me,
Be it with dangers, toil, or pain beset,
Which I will boldly tread. Smiles not my love?

Berth. I should, in truth: but how is this? methinks
Thou ever look'st upon the things to come,
I on the past. A great and honour'd man
I know thou'lt be: but O, bethink thee, then!
How once thou wert, within these happy walls
A little cheerful boy, with curly pate,
Who led the infant Bertha by the hand,
Storing her lap with ev'ry gaudy flower;
With speckled eggs stol'n from the hedgeling's nest,
And berries from the tree: ay, think on this,
And then I know thou'lt love me!
(*Trumpet sounds. Catching hold of him eagerly.*)
Hear'st thou that sound? The blessed saints preserve thee!
Must thou depart so soon?

Ethw. Yes, of necessity: reasons of weight
Constrain the king, and I, new in his service,
Must seem to follow him with willing steps.
But go thou with me to the castle gate.
We will not part until the latest moment.

Berth. Yet stop, I pray, thou must receive my pledge.
See'st thou this woven band of many dyes,
Like to a mottled snake? its shiny woof
Was whiten'd in the pearly dew of eve,
Beneath the silver moon: its varied warp
Was dyed with potent herbs, at midnight cull'd.
It hath a wondrous charm: the breast that wears it
No change of soft affection ever knows.

Ethw. (*receiving it with a smile.*) I'll wear it, Bertha. (*Trumpet sounds.*)
Hark! it calls me hence.

Berth. O go not yet! here is another gift,
This ring enrich'd with stone of basilisk,
Whenever press'd by the kind wearer's hand,
Presents the giver's image to his mind.
Wilt thou not wear it?

Ethw. (*receiving it.*) Yes, and press it too.

Berth. And in this purse—(*taking out a purse.*)

Ethw. What! still another charm? (*laughing.*)

Thou simple maid!
Dost thou believe that witched geer like this
Hath power a lover faithful to retain,
More than thy gentle self?
Berth. Nay, laugh, but wear them.
Ethw. I will, my love, since thou wilt have it so.
(*Putting them in his breast.*) Here are they lodged, and cursed be the hand
That plucks them forth! And now receive my pledge.
It is a jewel of no vulgar worth: (*ties it on her arm.*)
Wear it, and think of me. But yet, belike,
It must be steep'd into some wizard's pot,
Or have some mystic rhyming muttered o'er it,
Ere it will serve the turn.
Berth. (*pressing the jewel on her arm.*)
O no! right well I feel there is no need.
Ethw. Come, let us go: we do not part, thou know'st,
But at the castle gate. Cheer up, my Bertha!
I'll soon return, and oft return again.
[Exeunt.

Scene IV.—An apartment in a royal castle.

Enter Ethwald and Alwy, speaking as they enter.

Ethw. What peace! peace, say'st thou, with these glorious arms,
In conquest red, occasion bright'ning round us,
And smiling victory, with beck'ning hand,
Pointing to future fields of nobler strife,
With richer honours crown'd? What, on the face
Of such fair prospects draw the veil of peace!
Cold blasting peace! The blackest fiend of hell
Hath not a thought more dev'lish!
Alwy. It is indeed, a flat unpleasant tale
For a young warrior's ear: but well hast thou
Improv'd the little term of bold occasion;
Short while thou wert but Mollo's younger son,
Now art thou Mairnieth's lord.
Ethw. And what is Mairnieth's lordship! I will own
That, to my distant view, such state appear'd
A point of fair and noble eminence;
But now—what is it now? O! it is sunk
Into a petty knoll! I am as one
Who doth attempt some lofty mountain's height,
And having gained what to the upcast eye
The summit's point appeared, astonish'd sees
It's cloudy top, majestic and enlarged,
Towering aloft, as distant as before.
Alwy. Patience, brave Ethwald; ere thy locks are grey,
Thy helmed head shall yet in battle tower,
And fair occasion shape thee fair reward.
Ethw. Ere that my locks are grey! the world ere now
Hath crouch'd beneath a beardless youth. But I—
I am as one who mounts to th' azure sky
On the rude billow's back, soon sunk again:
Like the loud thunder of th' upbreaking cloud,
The terror of a moment. Fate perverse!
'Till now, war's frowning spirit wont, when rous'd,
To urge with whirling lash his sable steeds,
Nor slack his furious speed till the wide land
From bound to bound beneath his axle shook:
But soon as in my hand the virgin spear
Had flesh'd its ruddy point, then is he turn'd
Like a tired braggard to his caves of sloth.
(*stamping on the ground.*)
Peace! cursed peace! Who will again unchain
The grizly dog of war?
Alwy. Mean'st thou the British prince?
Ethw. (*eagerly.*) What say'st thou, Alwy?
Alwy. I said not aught.
Ethw. Nay, marry! but thou didst!
And it has rais'd a thought within my mind.
The British prince releas'd, would he not prove
A dog of war, whose yell would soon be follow'd?
Alwy. They do indeed full hard advantage take
Of his captivity, and put upon him
Conditions suited to his hapless state,
More than his princely will.
Ethw. 'Tis basely done: would that some friendly hand
His prison would unbar, and free the thrall!
But no, no, no! I to the king resign'd him;
'Twere an unworthy deed.
Alwy. It were most difficult;
For now they keep him in a closer hold,
And bind his hands with iron.
Ethw. Have they done this? I'm glad on't! O I'm glad on't!
They promised nought unworthy of a prince
To put upon him—Now my hands are free!
And, were it made of living adamant,
I will unbar his door. Difficult, say'st thou!
No, this hath made it easy.
Alwy. Well, softly then; we may devise a way
By which the Seneschal himself will seem
The secret culprit in this act.
Ethw. No, no!
I like it not: tho' I must work i' the dark,
I'll not in cunningly devised light
Put on my neighbour's cloak to work his ruin.
But let's to work a-pace! the storm shall rise!
My sound shall yet be heard!
Alwy. Fear not, thou shalt ere long be heard again,
A dark'ning storm which shall not soon be lay'd.
Ethw. Ah, thou hast touch'd where my life's life is cell'd!
Is there a voice of prophecy within thee?

(*catching hold of his arm eagerly.*)
I will believe there is! my stirring soul
Leapt at thy words. Such things ere now have been:
Men oft have spoke, unweeting of themselves;
Yea, the wild winds of night have utter'd words,
That have unto the list'ning ear of hope
His future greatness told, ere yet his thoughts
On any certain point had fix'd their hold.

Alwy. Thou may'st believe it: I myself, methinks,
Feel secret earnest of thy future fortune;
And please myself to think my friendly hand
May humbly serve, perhaps, to build thy greatness.

Ethw. Come to my heart, my friend! tho' new in friendship,
Thou, and thou only, bear'st true sympathy
With mine aspiring soul. I can with thee
Unbar my mind—Methinks thou shiv'rest, Alwy.

Alwy. 'Tis very cold.

Ethw. Is it? I feel it not:
But in my chamber burns the crackling oak;
There let us go.

Alwy. If you are so inclin'd.

(*As they are going* Ethw. *stops short, and catches hold of* Alwy *eagerly.*)

Ethw. A sudden fancy strikes me: Woggarwolfe,
That restless ruffian, might with little art
Be rous'd on Wessex to commit aggression:
Its royal chief, now leaguing with our king,
Will take the field again.

Alwy. We might attempt him instantly: but move,
In faith I'm cold! [EXEUNT.

SCENE V.—A DARK APARTMENT IN THE SAME CASTLE. WOGGARWOLFE IS DISCOVERED ASLEEP UPON A COUCH OF RUSHES, AND COVERED WITH A MAT.

Enter ALWY and a FOLLOWER, with a lad bearing a torch before them. ALWY signs with his hand, and the torch-bearer retires to a distance.

Alwy. Softly, ere we proceed; a sudden thought,
Now crossing o'er my mind, disturbs me much.
He who to night commands the farther watch,
Canst thou depend upon him?

Fol. Most perfectly; and, free of hostile bounds,
The British prince ere this pursues his way.

Alwy. I'm satisfied: now to our present purpose.

(*As they advance towards the couch,* Woggarwolfe *is heard speaking in his sleep.*)
Ha! speaks he in his sleep? some dream disturbs him:
His quiv'ring limbs beneath the cov'ring move.
He speaks again.

Wog. (*in his sleep.*) Swift, in your package stow those dead men's geer,
And loose their noble coursers from the stall.

Alwy. Ay, plund'ring in his sleep.

Wog. Wipe thou that blade:
Those bloody throats have drench'd it to the hilt.

Alwy. O, hear the night-thoughts of that bloody hound!
I must awake him. Ho, brave Woggarwolfe!

Wog. Hear how those women scream! we'll still them shortly.

Alwy. Ho, Woggarwolfe!

Wog. Who calls me now? cannot you master it?
(Alwy *knocks upon the ground with his stick.*)
What, batt'ring on it still? Will it not yield?
Then fire the gate.

Alwy. (*shaking him.*) Ho, Woggarwolfe, I say!

Wog. (*starting up half awake.*) Is not the castle taken?

Alwy. Yes, it is taken.

Wog. (*rubbing his eyes.*) Pooh! it is but a dream.

Alwy. But dreams full oft are found of real events
The forms and shadows.
There is in very deed a castle taken,
In which your Wessex foes have left behind
Nor stuff, nor store, nor mark of living thing.
Bind on thy sword, and call thy men to arms!
Thy boiling blood will bubble in thy veins,
When thou hast heard it is the tower of Boruth.

Wog. My place of strength?

Fol. Yes, chief; I spoke with one new from the West,
Who saw the ruinous broil.

Wog. By the black fiends of hell! therein is stored
The chiefest of my wealth. Upon its walls
The armour of a hundred fallen chiefs
Did rattle to the wind.

Alwy. Now will it sound elsewhere.

Wog. (*in despair.*) My noble steeds, and all my stalled kine!
O, the fell hounds! no mark of living thing?

Fol. No mark of living thing.

Wog. Ah! and my little arrow-bearing boy!
He whom I spared amidst a slaughter'd heap,
Smiling, all weetless of th' uplifted stroke
Hung o'er his harmless head!
Like a tamed cub I rear'd him at my feet:
He could tell biting jests, bold ditties sing,
And quaff his foaming bumper at the board,
With all the mock'ry of a little man.
By heav'n, I'll leave alive within their walls,
Nor maid, nor youth, nor infant at the breast,
If they have slain that child! blood-thirsty ruffians!

Alwy. Ay, vengeance! vengeance! rouse thee like a man!
Occasion tempts; the foe, not yet return'd,
Have left their castle careless of defence.
Call all thy followers secretly to arms:
Set out upon the instant.

Wog. By holy saints, I will! reach me, I pray! (*pointing to his arms lying at*

a little distance from him.)

Alwy. (*giving them.*) There, be thou speedy.

Wog. (*putting on his armour.*) Curse on those loosen'd springs, they will not catch!
Oh, all the goodly armour I have lost!
Light curses on my head! if I do leave them,
Or spear, or shield, or robe, or household stuff,
Or steed within their stalls, or horn or hoof
Upon their grassy hills! (*looking about.*) What want I now?
Mine armour-man hath ta'en away my helm—
'Faith, and my target too! hell blast the buzzard!

[Exit *furiously*.

Alwy. (*laughing.*) Ethwald, we have fulfilled thy bidding well,
With little cost of craft! But let us follow,
And keep him to the bent. [Exeunt.

ACT III.

Scene I. A SMALL CLOSE GROVE, WITH A STEEP ROCKY BANK AT ONE END OF IT. SEVERAL PEASANTS ARE DISCOVERED STANDING UPON THE BANK, AS IF LOOKING AT SOME DISTANT SIGHT.

1st. Pea. Good lack a day! how many living souls,
In wide, confused, eddying motion mix'd,
Like cross set currents on the restless face
Of winter floods!

2d Pea. Where fight the Northern Mercians?

1st Pea. On the right.
The gentle Ethling, as I am inform'd,
Fights likewise on the right: Heav'n spare his head!
'Tis his first battle.

3d Pea. Hear, hear! still louder swells that horrid sound.

1st Pea. Ay, many voices join in that loud din,
Which soon shall shout no more.

3d Pea. Ay, good neighbour,
Full gloriously now looks that cover'd field,
With all those moving ranks and glitt'ring arms;
But he who shall return by setting sun,
Will see a sorry sight.

(*A loud distant noise.*)

1st Pea. Heav'n save us all! it is the warlike yell
Of those damn'd Britons that increaseth so.
By all the holy saints, our men are worsted!

(*an increasing noise heard without.*)

Look! yonder look! they turn their backs and fly.

3d Pea. O blasting shame! where fights brave Ethwald now?
He is, I fear, far in the distant wing.
Let us be gone! we are too near them here:
The flight comes this way: hear that horrid sound!
The saints preserve us!

(*The sound of the battle increases, and is heard nearer. The* Peasants *come hastily down from the bank, and* Exeunt.

Enter Edward with several followers disordered and panic-struck.

1st Fol. (*looking round.*) They cease to follow us: this thickest grove
Has stopp'd the fell pursuit: here may we rest.

(Edward *throws himself down at the root of a tree, and covers his face with his hands.*)

2d Fol. (*filling his helmet with water from a stream, and presenting it to* Edw.)
My prince, this cooling water will refresh you.

Ed. (*keeping his face still covered with one hand, and waving him off with the other.*)
Away, away! and do not speak to me!

(*A deep pause, the noise of the battle is again heard coming nearer.*)

1st Fol. We must not tarry here. (*to* Edw.)
My Lord, the farther thickets of this wood
Will prove a sure concealment: shall we move?

Edw. (*still covering his face.*) Let the earth gape and hide me. (*another deep pause.*)

3d Fol. to 1st. The sin of all this rout falls on thy head,
Thou cursed Thane! thou, and thy hireling knaves,
First turn'd your backs and fled.

1st Fol. to 3d. Thou liest, foul tongue! it was thy kinsman, there,
Who first did turn; for I, was borne away,
(*pointing to 4th* Fol.)
Unwillingly away, by the rude stream
Of his fear-stricken bands. When, till this hour,
Did ever armed Briton see my back?

4th Fol. Arm'd Britons dost thou call them? devils they are!
Thou know'st right well they deal with wicked sprites.
Those horrid yells were not the cries of men;
And fiends of hell look'd thro' their flashing eyes.
I fear to face the power of simple man
As little as thyself.

Enter more Fugitives.

1st Fol. (*to* Ed.) Up, my good Lord! Hence let us quickly move;
We must not stay.

Ed. Then thrust me thro' and leave me.
I'll flee no more. (*looking up wildly, then fixing his eyes wistfully upon* 3d Follower, *and bending one knee to the ground.*)
Ebbert, thy sword is keen, thy arm is strong:
O, quickly do't! and I shall be with those
Who feel nor shame nor panic.

3d Fol. *and several others turn their faces away and weep.)*

Enter more FUGITIVES.

1st Fol. What, is all lost?

1st Fug. Yes, yes! our wing is beaten.
Seagurth alone, with a few desp'rate men,
Still sets his aged breast against the storm;
But thick the aimed weapons round him fly,
Like huntsmen's arrows round the toiled boar,
And he will soon be nothing.

Edw. (*starting up.*) O, God! O, living God! my noble father!
He has no son! Off, ye debasing fears!
I'll tear thee forth, base heart, if thou dost let me.
(*coming forward and stretching out his arms.*)
Companions, noble Mercians—Ah, false word!
I may not call you noble. Yet, perhaps,
One gen'rous spark within your bosom glows.
Sunk in disgrace still lower than ye all,
I may not urge—Who lists will follow me!

All with one voice. We will all follow thee!

Ed. Will ye, in truth? then we'll be brave men still. (*brandishing his sword as he goes off.*)
My noble father!

[EXEUNT, *clashing their arms eagerly.*

SCENE II.

A confused noise of a battle is heard. The scene draws up, and discovers the BRITISH and MERCIAN armies engaged. Near the front of the stage they are seen in close fight, and the ground strew'd with several wounded and dead soldiers, as if they had been fighting for some time. Farther off, missile weapons and showers of arrows darken the air, and the view of the more distant battle is concealed in thick clouds of dust. The MERCIANS gain ground upon the BRITONS; and loud cries are raised by them to encourage one another. An active MERCIAN falls, and their progress is stopped whilst they endeavour to bear him off.

Fallen Mercian. I'm slain, I'm slain! tread o'er me and push forward.

Mer. Chief. O stop not thus! to it again, brave Mercians!

(*The* Mercians *push on, encouraging one another with cries and clashing of arms: one of their bravest soldiers is wounded on the front of the stage, and staggers backwards.*)

Wounded Mer. Ay, this is death: O that my life had held
To see the end of this most noble game! (*falls down, but seeing the* Mercians *about to push the* Britons *off the stage, raises himself half from the ground, and claps his hands exultingly.*)
Well fought, brave Mercian! On, my noble Mercians! (*sinks down again.*)
I am in darkness now! a clod o' the earth! (*dies.*)

Britons (*without.*) Fresh succour, Britons! courage! victory!
Carwallen and fresh succour!

(*The* Britons *now raise a terrible yell and push back the* Mercians, *who yield ground and become spiritless and relaxed as their enemy becomes bolder. The* Britons *at last seize the* Mercian *standard, and raise another terrible yell, whilst the* Mercians *give way on every side.*)

1st falling Mer. Horror and death! the hand of wrath is o'er us!

2d falling Mer. A fell and fearful end! a bloody lair!
The trampling foe to tread out brave men's breath!

(*The* Britons *yell again, and the* Mercians *are nearly beat off the stage.*)

(*Voice without.*) Ethwald! the valiant Ethwald! succour, Mercians!

(*Voice within.*) Hear ye, brave comrades! Ethwald is at hand.

Enter ETHWALD, with his sword drawn.

Ethw. What, soldiers! yield ye thus, while vict'ry smiles
And bids us on to th' bent? Your northern comrades
Mock at their savage howls, and drive before them
These chafed beasts of prey. Come! to it bravely!
To it, and let their mountain matrons howl,
For these will soon be silent.
Give me the standard.

Voice. They have taken it.

Ethw. Taken! no, by the spirits of the brave!
Standard of ours on Snowdon winds to float!
No! this shall fetch it back! (*taking off his helmet and throwing it into the midst of the enemy, then rushing upon them bare-headed and sword in hand. The* Mercians *clash their arms and raise a great shout: the* Britons *are driven off the stage; whilst many of the dying* Mercians *clap their hands and raise a feeble shout after their comrades. The scene closes.*)

SCENE III.—AN OPEN SPACE BEFORE A ROYAL TENT; THE CURTAINS OF WHICH ARE TUCKED UP, AND SHEW A COMPANY OF WARRIORS AND DAMES WITHIN IT. ON EITHER SIDE OF THE OPEN STAGE SOLDIERS ARE DRAWN UP IN ORDER.

Enter two petty THANES on the front of the stage.

1st Thane. Here let us stand and see the ceremony.
Without the tent, 'tis said the king will crown
The gallant Ethling with a wreath of honour,
As the chief agent in this victory
O'er stern Carwallen and his Britons gain'd.

2d Thane. Thou sayest well. Within the royal tent
They wait, as I am told, the Ethling's coming,
Who is full tardy. Softly, they come forth.

*Now like a ship, with all her goodly sails
Spread to the sun, the haughty princess moves! (*A flourish of trumpets.*

Enter from the tent the KING, with ETHELBERT, EDRICK, THANES and ATTENDANTS; and ELBURGA, with DWINA and LADIES. They advance towards the front of the stage.

King. Nay, sweet Elburga, clear thy frowning brow;
He who is absent will not long delay
His pleasing duty here.
Elb. On such a day, my Lord, the brave I honour,
As those who have your royal arms maintain'd
In war's iron field, such honour meriting.
What individual chiefs, or here or absent,
Are therein lapt, by me unheeded is;
I deign not to regard it.
King. Thou art offended, daughter, but unwisely.
Plumed with the fairest honours of the field,
Such pious grief for a brave father's death,
Bespeaks a heart such as a gentle maid
In her faith-plighted Lord should joy to find.
Elb. Who best the royal honours of a prince
Maintains, best suits a royal maiden's love.
King. Elburga, thou forget'st that gentleness
Which suits thy gentle kind.
Elb. (*with much assum'd stateliness.*) I hope, my Lord,
I do meantime that dignity remember,
Which doth beseem the daughter of a king!
King. Fie! clear thy cloudy brow! it is my will
Thou honour graciously his modest worth.
(Elb. *bows, but smiles disdainfully.*)
By a well feigned flight, he was the first
Who broke the stubborn foe, op'ning the road
To victory. Here, with some public mark
Of royal favour, by thy hand received,
I will to honour him; for, since the battle,
A gloomy melancholy o'er him broods,
E'en far exceeding what a father's death
Should cast upon a youthful victor's triumph.
Ah; here he comes! look on that joyless face!
Elb. (*aside to* Dwina, *looking scornfully to* Edward, *as he approaches.*)
Look, with what slow and piteous gait he comes!
Like younger brother of a petty Thane,
Timing his footsteps to his father's dirge.
Dwina. (*aside.*) Nay, to my fancy seems it wond'rous graceful.
Elb. (*contemptuously.*) A youth, indeed, who might with humble grace
Beneath thy window tell his piteous tale.

Enter EDWARD, followed by ETHW: and ATTENDANTS.

King. Approach, my son: so will I call thee now.
Here is a face whose smiles should gild thy honours,
If thou art yet awake to beauty's power.
Edw. (*kissing* Elburga's *hand respectfully.*)
Honour'd I am, indeed; most dearly honour'd
I feel it here, (*his hand on his heart*) and should be joyful too,
If aught could gild my gloom.
(*sighs very deeply, then suddenly recollecting himself*)
Elburga, thou wert ever fond of glory,
And ever quick to honour valiant worth:
Ethwald, my friend—hast thou forgotten Ethwald?
(*presenting* Ethw. *to her.*)
Elb. Could I forget the warlike Thane of Mairnieth,
I must have barr'd mine ears against all sound;
For ev'ry voice is powerful in his praise,
And ev'ry Mercian tongue repeats his name.
(*smiling graciously upon* Ethw.)
King. (*impatiently.*) Where go we now? we wander from our purpose.
Edward, thy youthful ardour, season'd well
With warlike craft, has crown'd my age with glory:
Here be thy valour crown'd, it is my will,
With honour's wreath, from a fair hand receiv'd.
(*giving the wreath to* Elburga.)
Edw. (*earnestly.*) I do beseech you, uncle! pray receive
My grateful thanks! the mournful cypress best
Becomes my brow: this honour must not be.
King. Nay, lay aside unseemly diffidence;
It must be so.
Edw. (*impressively.*) My heart is much depress'd:
O do not add
The burden of an undeserved honour,
To bend me to the earth!
King. these warlike chieftains say it is deserv'd,
And nobly earn'd. It is with their concurrence,
That now I offer thee this warrior's wreath:
Yes, Ethling, and command thee to receive it.
(*Holding up his hand.*) There, let the trumpet sound. (*trumpets sound.*)
Edw. (*holding up his hands distractedly.*)
Peace, peace! nor put me to this agony!
(*trumpets cease.*)
And am I then push'd to this very point?
Well, then, away deceit! too long hast thou,
Like the incumbent monster of a dream
On the stretch'd sleeper's breast, depress'd my soul:
I shake thee off, foul mate! O royal sire,
And you, ye valiant Mercians, hear the truth!
Ye have believ'd, that by a feigned flight,
I gained the first advantage o'er the foe,
And broke their battle's strength: O, would I had!
That flight, alas! was real: the sudden impulse
Of a weak mind, unprov'd and strongly struck

* Probably I have received this idea from Samson Agonistes, where Dalila is compared to a stately ship of Tarsus "with all her bravery on, and tackle trim," &c.

With new and horrid things, until that hour
Unknown and unimagin'd.——
Nor was it honour's voice that called me back:
The call of nature saved me. Noble Seagurth!
Had I been son of any sire but thee,
I had in dark and endless shame been lost,
Nor e'er again before these valiant men
Stood in this royal presence.
In all my fortune, blest I am alone,
That my brave father, rescued by these arms,
Look'd on me, smiling thro' the shades of death,
And knew his son. He was a noble man!
He never turn'd from danger—but his son—
(*Many voices at once.*) His son is worthy of him!
(*Repeated again with more voices.*) His son is worthy of him!

Eth. (*with enthusiasm.*) His son is worthy of the noblest sire that ever wielded sword!

(*Voices.*) Crown him, fair princess! Crown the noble Edward!
(Elburga *offers him the wreath, which he puts aside vehemently.*)

Edw. Forbear! a band of scorpions round my brow
Would not torment me like this laurel wreath.
(Elb. *turns from him contemptuously, and gives the wreath to the* King.)

Edw. (*to* King.) What, good my Lord! is there not present here
A Mercian brow deserving of that wreath?
Shall he, who did with an uncover'd head
Your battle fight, still wear his brows unbound?
Do us not this disgrace!

King. (*fretfully.*) Thou dost forget the royal dignity:
Take it away. (*giving it to an Officer.*)
(*A confused murmuring amongst the soldiers.*)
(*Aside to the* Seneschal, *alarmed.*) What noise is that?

Sen. (*aside to* King.) Your troops, my sire, are much dissatisfied,
For that their fav'rite chief by you is deem'd
Unworthy of the wreath.

King. (*aside.*) What, is it so? call back mine officer. (*taking the wreath again, and giving it to* Elb.)
This wreath was meant for one of royal line,
But ev'ry noble Mercian, great in arms,
Is equal to a prince.
Crown the most valiant Ethwald.

Elb. (*crowning* Ethw. *with great assumed majesty.*)
Long may thy laurels flourish on thy brow,
Most noble chief!
(Ethw. *takes the wreath and presses it to his lips, bowing to* Elb. *then to the* King.)

Ethw. They, who beneath the royal banner fight,
Unto the fortunes of their royal chief
Their success owe. Honour'd indeed, am I,
That the brave Ethling hath so favour'd me,
And that I may, most humbly at your feet,
My royal sire, this martial garland lay.
(*He, kneeling, lays the wreath at the* King's *feet; the* King *raises him up and embraces him; the* Soldiers *clash their arms and call out.*)

Sold. Long live the King! and long live noble Ethwald!

This is several times repeated. Exeunt King, Edward, Elburga, &c. &c. Elburga *looking graciously to* Ethwald *as she goes off. Manent* Ethwald *and* Ethelbert.)

Eth. (*repeating indignantly as they go off.*)
Long live the King, and long live noble Ethwald!
Fie on the stupid clowns, that did not join
The gen'rous Edward's name! (*to* Eth. *who is standing looking earnestly after the Princess.*)
What dost thou gaze on?

Ethw. The princess look'd behind her as she went.

Eth. And what is that to thee?
(*walks silently across the stage once or twice, gloomy and dissatisfied, then turning short upon* Ethw.)
When wert thou last to see the lovely Bertha.

Ethw. (*hesitating.*) I cannot reckon it unto the day—
Some moons ago.

Eth. Some moons! the moon in her wide course, shines not
Upon a maid more lovely.

Ethw. I know it well.

Eth. Thou dost.

Ethw. (*after a pause looking attentively to* Eth. *who stands muttering to himself.*)
Methinks thou holdest converse with thyself.

Eth. (*speaking aloud, as if he continued to talk to himself.*)
She steps upon the flowery bosom'd earth,
As tho' it were a foot-cloth, fitly spread
Beneath the tread of her majestic toe;
And looks upon the human countenance,
Whereon her Maker hath the signs impress'd
Of all that he within the soul hath stored
Of great and noble, generous and benign,
As on a molten plate, made to reflect
Her grandeur and perfections.

Ethw. Of whom speak'st thou?

Eth. Not of the gentle Bertha. [Exit.

Ethw. What may he mean? He mark'd, with much displeasure,
The soldiers shout my name, and now my favour
With Mercia's princess frets him. What of this?
Ha! hath his active mind outrun mine own
In shaping future consequences? Yes,
It must be so; a cloudy curtain draws,
And to mine eye a goodly prospect shews,
Extending——No, I must not look upon it.
[Exit *hastily.*

Scene IV.—An open space with arms, garments, and other spoils of the Britons heaped up on every side of the stage.

Enter Soldiers and range themselves in order, then enter Ethelbert and a Soldier talking as they enter.

Eth. Ethwald, amongst his soldiers, dost thou say,
Divides his spoil?

Sol. He does, most bountifully;
Nor to himself more than a soldier's share
Retains, he is so gen'rous and so noble.

Eth. I thank thee, friend. (Soldier *retires.*)
(Eth. *after a pause.*)
I like not this: behind those heaps I'll stand.
And mark the manner of this distribution.
(*retires.*)

Enter Alwy and a petty Thane.

Alwy. Brave warriours! ye are come at his desire,
Who, for each humble soldier, bold in arms,
That has beneath his orders fought, still bears
A brother's heart. You see these goodly spoils:
He gives them not unto the cloister'd priests:
His soldiers pray for him. (Soldiers *shout.*)

Thane. (*to* Alwy.) What is thy meaning?

Alwy. Know'st thou not the king has now bestow'd
The chiefest portion of his British spoil
On Alban's abbey?

Enter Ethwald.

(*Soldiers shouting very loud.*) Long live brave
Ethwald! health to noble Ethwald!

Ethw. Thanks for these kindly greetings, valiant hearts!
(Soldiers *shout again very loud.*)
In truth, I stand before you brave companions,
Somewhat asham'd; for with my wishes match'd,
These hands are poor and empty. (*loud acclamations.*)
I thank you all again; for well I see
You have respect unto the dear good will
That must enrich these heaps of homely stuff.

Soldiers. Long live our gen'rous leader!

Ethw. (*giving a* Soldier *a helmet filled with lots.*)
Here, take the lots, and deal them fairly round.
Heaven send to all of you, my valiant friends,
A portion to your liking. This rough heap
(*pointing to the arms.*)
Will give at least to each some warlike trophy,
Which henceforth, hung upon his humble walls,
Shall tell his sons and grandsons yet to come
In what proud fields, and with what gallant mates.
Their father fought. And, methinks, well pleas'd,
Resting, as heretofore I oft have done,
My wand'ring steps beneath your friendly roofs,
Shall, looking up, the friendly token spy,
And in my host a fellow soldier hail.

Soldiers. (*with loud acclamations.*)
God bless you, noble chief! unto the death
We'll hold to you, brave leader!

Ethw. And, if to you I hold not, valiant Mercians,
No noble chief am I.
This motley geer, (*pointing to the spoils.*)
Would it were all composed of precious things!
That to his gentle wife or favour'd maid,
Each soldier might have borne some goodly gift;
But tell them, British matrons cross the woof
With coarser hands than theirs.

1st Sol. Saint Alban bless his noble countenance!
'Twas fashion'd for bestowing.

2d Sol. Heav'n store his halls with wealth!

Ethw. (*going familiarly amongst the soldiers as the lots are drawing.*)
Well, Ogar, hast thou drawn? good luck to thee.
And thou, good Baldwin too? Yet, fie upon it!
The heaviest weapon of the British host
Lacks weight of metal for thy sinewy arm.—
Ha! health to thee, mine old and honest host!
I'm glad to see thee with thine arm unbound.
And, ruddy too! thy dame should give me thanks:
I send thee home to her a younger man
Than I receiv'd thee. (*to the* Soldier *with the lots who is passing him.*)
Nay, stay thee, friend, I pray, nor pass me o'er.
We all must share alike: hold out thy cap.
(*smiling as he draws.*)
The knave would leave me out.
(*Loud acclamations, the* Soldiers *surrounding him and clashing their arms.*)

Enter Selred and Followers.

Sel. (*to* Sol.) Ha! whence comes all this uproar?

Sol. Know you not?
Your noble brother 'midst his soldiers shares
His British spoils.

Sel. The grateful knaves! is all their joy for this?
(*to his* Followers.)
Well, go and add to it my portion also;
'Twill make them roar the louder. Do it quickly. [Exit.

Soldiers (*looking after* Sel.) Heaven bless him too, plain, honest, careless soul!
He gives as tho' he gave not. (*loud acclamations.*
Long live brave Ethwald, and the noble Selred.

Ethw. (*aside to* Alwy *displeased.*) How came he here?

Alwy. I cannot tell.

Ethw. (*to* Sol.) We are confined within this narrow space:
Go range yourselves at large on yon green sward,
And there we'll spread the lots.
(Exeunt *the* Soldiers, *arranging themselves as they go.*)

SCENE. V—AN APARTMENT IN A ROYAL CASTLE.

Enter ETHELBERT, and leans his back upon a pillar near the front of the stage, as if deeply engaged in gloomy thoughts: afterwards, enters ETHWALD by the opposite side, at the bottom of the stage, and approaches ETH. slowly, observing him attentively as he advances.

Ethw. Thou art disturbed, Ethelbert.
Eth. I am.
Ethw. Thine eyes roll strangely, as tho' thou beheld'st
Some dreadful thing:———
On what look'st thou?
Eth. Upon my country's ruin.
The land is full of blood: her savage birds
O'er human carcasses do scream and batten:
The silent hamlet smokes not; in the field
The aged grandsire turns the joyless soil:
Dark spirits are abroad, and gentle worth
Within the narrow house of death is laid,
An early tenant.
Ethw. Thou'rt beside thyself!
Think'st thou that I, with these good arms, will stand
And suffer all this wreck?
Eth. Ha! say'st thou so? Alas, it is thyself
Who rul'st the tempest! (*shaking his head solemnly.*)
Ethw. If that I bear the spirit of a man,
Thou falsely see'st! Think'st thou I am a beast;
A fanged wolf, reft of all kindly sense,
That I should do such deeds?
I am a man aspiring to be great,
But loathing cruelty: who wears a sword
That will protect and not destroy the feeble.
(*putting his hand vehemently upon his sword.*)
Eth. Ha! art thou roused! blessings on thy wrath!
I'll trust thee still. But see, the Ethling comes,
And on his face he wears a smile of joy.

Enter EDWARD, advancing gaily to ETHWALD.

Ed. A boon, a boon, great Mairnieth's Thane I crave.
Eth. You come not with a suppliant's face, my Lord.
Ed. Not much cast down, for lack of confidence,
My suit to gain. That envious braggard there,
The chief of Bournoth, says, no Mercian arm,
Of man now living, can his grandsire's sword
In warlike combat wield: and, in good sooth!
I forfeit forty of my fattest kine
If Ethwald's arm does not the feat achieve.
(*to* Ethw.) What say'st thou, friend? Methinks thou'rt grave and silent:
Hast thou so soon thy noble trade forgot?
Have at it then! I'll rouse thy spirit up:
I'll soldier thee again. (*drawing his sword playfully upon* Ethwald, *who defends himself in like manner.*
Fie on't! that was a wicked northern push:
It smells of thine old sports in Mollo's walls.
(*pauses and fights again.*)
To it again! How listless thou art grown!
Where is thy manhood gone?
Ethw. Fear not, my Lord, enough remains behind
To win your forty kine.
Ed. I'll take thy word for't now: in faith, I'm tired!
I've been too eager in the morning's chace,
To fight your noonday battles. (*putting the point of his sword to the ground, and leaning familiarly upon* Ethwald.)
My arm, I fear, would make but little gain
With Bournoth's sword. By arms and brave men's love!
I could not brook to see that wordy braggard
Perching his paltry sire above thy pitch:
It rais'd my fiend within. When I am great,
I'll build a tower upon the very spot
Where thou did'st first the British army stay,
And shame the grandsires of those mighty Thanes
Six ages deep. Lean I too hard upon thee?
Ethw. No, nothing hard: most pleasant and most kindly.
Take your full rest, my Lord.
Ed. In truth, I do: methinks it does me good
To rest upon thy brave and valiant breast.
Eth. stepping before them with great animation.)
Well said, most noble Edward!
The bosom of the brave is that on which
Rests many a head; but most of all, I trow,
Th' exposed head of princely youth thereon
Rests gracefully. (*steps back some paces and looks at them with delight.*)
Ed. You look upon us, Thane, with eager eyes,
And looks of meaning.
Eth. Pardon me, I pray!
My fancy, oftentimes, will wildly play,
And strong conceits possess me.
Indulge my passing freak: I am a man
Upon whose grizzled head the work of time
Hath been by care performed, and, with the young,
Claiming the priv'lege of a man in years.
(*taking the hands of* Ed. *and* Eth. *and joining them together.*)
This is a lovely sight! indulge my fancy;
And on this sword, it is a brave man's sword,
Swear that you will unto each other prove,
As prince and subject, true.
Ed. No, no, good Thane!
As friends, true friends! that doth the whole include.
I kiss the honor'd blade. (*kissing the sword held out by* Eth.)
Eth. (*presenting the sword to* Ethw.) And what says noble Ethwald?
Ethw. All that the brave should say. (*kissing it also.*)
Eth. (*triumphantly.*) Now, Mercia, thou art strong! give me your hands;
Faith, I must lay them both upon my breast!
(*pressing both their hands to his breast.*)
This is a lovely sight!

Ethw. (*softened.*) You weep, good Ethelbert.

Eth. brushing off his tears with his hand.)
Yes, yes! such tears as doth the warm shower'd earth
Shew to the kindly sun.

Ed. (*to* Ethw. *gently clapping his shoulder.*)
I love this well: thou like a woman weep'st,
And fightest like a man. But look, I pray!
There comes my arm's-man with the braggard's sword:
Let us assay it yonder. [EXEUNT.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—AN APARTMENT IN A ROYAL CASTLE.

Ethwald is discovered sitting in deep meditation by the side of a couch, with a lamp burning by him on a high stand: the rest of the stage entirely dark.

Ethw. Why am I haunted with these thoughts? What boots it,
That from their weak and priest-beridden king
The soldiers turn distasteful, and on me
In mutter'd wishes call? What boots all this?
Occasion fairly smiles, but I am shackled.
Elsewhere I needs must turn my climbing thoughts;
But where? The youthful see around them spread
A boundless field of undetermin'd things,
Towering in tempting greatness:
But, to the closer scan of men matured,
These fade away, and in the actual state
Of times and circumstances, each perceives
A path which doth to his advancement lead,
And only one; as to the dazzled eye
Of the night rev'ller, o'er his emptied bowl,
The multiplied and many whirling lights
Do shrink at last into one single torch,
Shedding a steady ray. I see my path;
But what is that to me? my steps are chain'd.
Amongst the mighty great, the earth's high lords,
There is no place for me! I must lie down
In the dark tomb with those, whose passing brightness
Shines for a while, but leaves no ray behind.
(*throws himself half upon the couch, and groans heavily.*)

Enter BOY.

Boy. My Lord, my Lord! (Ethw. *lifts up his head, and looks sternly at him.*)
Are you unwell, my Lord?

Ethw. What dost thou want?

Boy. I could not sleep; and as I list'ning lay
To the drear wind that whistles thro' these towers,
Methought I heard you groan like one in pain.

Ethw. Away, and go to sleep: I want thee not:
I say, begone. (*sternly.*) [EXIT Boy.
(*he pauses a while, then sighs very deeply.*)
He hangs upon me like a dead man's grasp
On the wreck'd swimmer's neck—his boyish love
Was not my seeking; it was fasten'd on me,
And now it hath become an iron band
To fetter down my powers. O that I were
Amidst the warlike and ungentle cast
To strive uncumber'd! What have I to do
With soft affection? (*soften'd.*) Yet it needs must be!
His gen'rous love: his brave ungrudging love:
His manly gentle love—O that he had
Mine equal friend been born, who in my rise
Had fair advancement found, and by my side
The next in honour stood!
He drags me to the earth! I needs must lay
My head i' the dust.—Dull hopeless privacy!
From it my soul recoils: unto my nature
It is the death of death, horrid and hateful.
(*Starting up eagerly.*) No, in the tossed bark,
Commander of a rude tumultuous crew,
On the wild ocean would I rather live;
Or, in the mined caverns of the earth
Untamed bands of lawless men controul,
By crime and dire necessity enleagued:
Yea, in the dread turmoil of midnight storms,
If such there be, lead on the sable hosts
Of restless sprites, than say to mortal man
"Thou art my master."

Enter BOY.

What, here again?

Boy. O pardon me, my Lord! I am in fear;
Strange sounds do howl and hurtle round my bed;
I cannot rest.

Ethw. Be gone, thou wakeful pest! I say, begone! [EXIT Boy.
(*Ethw. walks several times across the stage and then pauses.*)
Yet in my mind one ever present thought
Rises omnipotent o'er all the rest,
And says, "thou shalt be great."
What may this mean? before me is no way.
What deep endued seer will draw this veil
Of dark futurity? Of such I've heard,
But when the troubled seek for them, they are not.

Re-enter BOY.

(*stamping with his foot.*) What! here a third time?

Boy. (*falling at his feet.*) O, my noble master!
If you should slay me, I must come to you;
For in my chamber fearful things there be,
That sound i' the dark; O do not chide me back!

Ethw. Strange sound within thy chamber, foolish wight!

Boy. (*starting.*) Good mercy, list!

Ethw. It is some night-bird screaming on the tower.

Boy. Ay, so belike it seemeth, but I know—

Ethw. What dost thou know?

Boy. It is no bird, my Lord.

Ethw. What would'st thou say?

Boy. (*clasping his hands together, and staring earnestly in* Ethw's *face.*)

At dead of night, from the dark Druid's cave
Up rise unhallow'd sprites, and o'er the earth,
Hold for the term their wicked rule. Aloft,
Some mounted on the heavy sailing cloud,
Oft pour down noisome streams or biting hail
On the benighted hind, and from his home,
With wayward eddying blasts, still beat him back.
Some on the waters shriek like drowning men,
And, when the pitying passenger springs forth
To lend his aid, the dark flood swallows him.
Some, on lone marshes shine like moving lights;
And some on towers and castle turrets perch'd,
Do scream like nightly birds, to scare the good,
Or rouse the murd'rer to his bloody work.

Ethw. The Druid's cave, say'st thou? What cave is that?
Where is it? Who hath seen it? What scar'd fool
Hath fill'd thine ears with all these horrid things?

Boy. It is a cavern vast and terrible,
Under the ground full deep: perhaps, my Lord,
Beneath our very feet, here as we stand;
For few do know the spot and centre of it,
Tho' many mouths it has and entries dark.
Some are like hollow pits bor'd thro' the earth,
O'er which, the list'ning herdsman bends his ear,
And hears afar their lakes of molten fire
Swelt'ring and boiling like a mighty pot.
Some like straight passes thro' the rifted rocks,
From which oft issue shrieks, and whistling gusts,
And wailings dismal. Nay, some, as they say,
Deep hollow'd underneath the river's bed,
Which shew their narrow op'nings thro' the fern
And tangling briers, like dank and noisome holes
Wherein foul adders breed. But not far hence
The chiefest mouth of all, 'midst beetling rocks
And groves of blasted oaks, gapes terrible.

Ethw. So near? But who are they who dwell within?

Boy. The female high arch Druid therein holds,*
With many Druids tending on her will,
(Old, as they say, some hundred years or more)
Her court, where horrid spells bind to her rule
Spirits of earth and air.

Ethw. Ay, so they tell thee;
But who is he that has held converse with her?

Boy. Crannock, the bloody prince, did visit her,
And she did shew to him the bloody end
Whereto he soon should come; for all she knows
That is, or has been, or shall come to pass.

Ethw. Yes, in times past such intercourse might be,
But who has seen them now?

Boy. Thane Ethelbert.

Ethw. (*starting.*) What, said'st thou Ethelbert?

Boy. Yes, truly; oft he goes to visit them
What time the moon rides in her middle course.

Ethw. Art thou assured of this?

Boy. A youth, who saw him issue from the cave,
'Twas him who told it me.

Ethw. Mysterious man!
(*after a pause.*) Where sleeps the Thane?

Boy. If walls and doors may hold him,
He sleeps, not distant, in the Southern Tower.

Ethw. Take thou that lamp, and go before me, then.

Boy. Where?

Ethw. To the Southern Tower. Art thou afraid?

Boy. No, my good Lord, but keep you close behind.

[Exeunt Boy, *bearing the lamp, and looking often behind to see that* Ethw. *is near him.*

Scene II.—A small gallery or passage with a door in front, which is open'd, and

Enter Ethwald and Ethelbert with a lamp in his hand.

Eth. Then, by the morrow's midnight moon we meet
At the arch Sister's cave: till then, farewell!

Ethw. Farewell! I will be punctual. [Exit.

Eth. (*looking after him for some time before he speaks.*)
It ever is the mark'd propensity
Of restless and aspiring minds to look
Into the stretch of dark futurity.
But be it so: it now may turn to good.
[Exit, *returning back again into the same chamber from which he came.*)

Scene III.—A wide arched cave, rude but grand, seen by a sombre light; a small furnace burning near the front of the stage.

Enter Ethwald and Ethelbert, who pause and look round for some time without speaking.

Ethw. Gloomy, and void, and silent!

Eth. Hush!

* It is natural to suppose that the Diviners or Fortune-tellers of this period should, in their superstitions and pretensions, very much resemble the ancient Druidesses who were so much revered amongst the Britons as oracles and prophetesses, and that they should, amongst the vulgar, still retain the name of their great predecessors. In Henry's History of Britain, vol. i. p. 181, it will be found that the superstitious practices of the Druids continued long after their religion was abolished, and resisted for a long time the light of christianity; and that even so late as the reign of Canute, it was necessary to make laws against it.

Ethw. What hearest thou?

Eth. Their hollow sounding steps. Lo! see'st thou not?

Pointing to the further end of the stage, where from an obscure recess enter three MYSTICS robed in white, and, ranged on one side of the stage, point to ETHWALD: whilst from another obscure recess, enter three MYSTIC SISTERS, and, ranged on the opposite side, point to ETH. then from a mid recess enters the ARCH SISTER, robed also in white, but more majestick than the others, and a train of MYSTICS and MYSTIC SISTERS behind her. She advances half way up the stage, then stops short, and points also to ETHWALD.

(*All the* Mystics, *&c. speaking at once.*)
Who art thou?

Arch Sist. I know thee who thou art; the hand of Mercia:
The hand that lifts itself above the head.
I know thee who thou art.

Ethw. Then haply ye do know my errand too.

Arch Sist. I do; but turn thee back upon thy steps,
And tempt thy fate no farther.

Ethw. From the chaf'd shore turn back the swelling tide!
I came to know my fate, and I will know it.

1st Mystic. Must we call up from the deep centre's womb
The spirits of the night and their dread Lord?

1st Myst. S. Must we do that which makes the entombed dead
From coffins start?

Ethw. Raise the whole host of darkness an' ye will,
But I must be obey'd.
(*The* Arch Sister *shrieks, and, throwing her mantle over her face, turns to go away.*)

Ethw. If there is power in mortal arm to hold you,
Ye stir not hence until I am obey'd.

1st Myst. And how compell'st thou?

Ethw. With this good sword.

1st Myst. Swords here are children's wands, of no avail:
There, warriour, is thy weapon.

Ethw. Where, Mystic? say.

1st Mystic. (*pointing to the furnace.*) Behold within that fire
A bar of burning iron! pluck it forth.

Ethw. (*resolutely.*) I will.
(*goes to the furnace, and putting in his hand pulls out what seems a red hot bar of iron.*)

Arch Sist. (*throwing off her mantle.*)
Thou hast subdued me; thou shalt be obey'd.

Ethw. (*casting away the bar.*)
Away, tho a paltry terrour!

Arch Sist. (*to* Ethw.) We now begin our rites: be firm, be silent.

She stretches forth her hand with a commanding air, and the MYSTICS and MYSTIC SISTERS begin their incantations at the bottom of the stage, moving round in several mazy circles one within another. Fire is at last seen flashing from the midst of the inner circle, and immediately they all begin a hollow muttering sound, which becomes louder and louder, till at length it is accompanied with dismal sounds from without, and distant musick, solemn and wild.

Ethw. (*grasping* Ethelbert's *hand.*) What dismal sounds are these?
'Tis like a wild responsive harmony,
Tun'd to the answ'ring yells of damned souls.
What follows this? Some horrid thing! Thou smil'st:
Nay, press thy hand, I pray thee, on my breast;
There wilt thou find no fear.

Eth. Hush! hear that distant noise.

Ethw. 'Tis thunder in the bowels of the earth,
Heard from afar.

A subterraneous noise like thunder is heard at a distance, becoming louder as it approaches. Upon hearing this, the MYSTICS suddenly leave off their rites: the music ceases, and they, opening their circles, range themselves on either side of the stage, leaving the ARCH SISTER alone in the middle.

Arch Sist. (*holding up her hand.*) Mystics and Mystic Maids, and leagued bands!
The master spirit comes: prepare.
(*All repeat after her.*) Prepare.

1st Mystic. Hark! thro' the darken'd realms below,
Thro' the fiery region's glow;
Thro' the massy mountain's core,
Thro' the mines of living ore;
Thro' the yawning caverns wide,
Thro' the solid and the void;
Thro' the dank and thro' the dry,
Thro' th' unseen of mortal eye;
Upon the earthquake's secret course, afar
I hear the sounding of thy car:
Sulphureous vapours load the rising gale;
We know thy coming; mighty master, hail!
(*They all repeat.*) Mighty master, hail!
(*The stage darkens by degrees, and a thick vapour begins to ascend at the bottom of the stage.*)

2d Mystic. Hark, hark! what murmurs fill the dome!
Who are they who with thee come?
Those who, in their upward flight,
Rouse the tempests of the night:
Those who ride in flood and fire;
Those who rock the tumbling spire:
Those who, on the bloody plain,
Shriek with the voices of the slain:
Those who thro' the darkness glare,
And the sleepless murd'rer scare:
Those who take their surly rest
On the troubled dreamer's breast:
Those who make their nightly den
In the guilty haunts of men.
Thro' the heavy air I hear
Their hollow trooping onward bear:
The torches' shrinking flame is dim and pale;
I know thy coming; mighty master, hail!
(*All repeat again.*) Mighty master, hail!
(*The stage becomes still darker, and a thicker vapour ascends.*)

3d Mystic. Lo! the mystic volumes rise!
Wherein are lapt from mortal eyes
Horrid deeds as yet unthought,
Bloody battles yet unfought:
The sudden fall and deadly wound
Of the tyrant yet uncrown'd;
And his line of many dyes
Who yet within the cradle lies.
Moving forms, whose stilly bed
Long hath been among the dead;
Moving forms, whose living morn
Breaks with the nations yet unborn,
In mystic vision walk the horrid pale:
We own thy presence; mighty master, hail!
(*All.*) Mighty master, hail!

Enter from the farther end of the stage crowds of terrible spectres, dimly seen through the vapour, which now spreads itself over the whole stage. All the MYSTICS and MYSTIC SISTERS bow themselves very low, and the ARCH SISTER, standing alone in the middle, bows to all the different sides of the cave.

Ethw. (*to* 1*st* Mystic.) To every side the mystic mistress bows.
What meaneth this? mine eye no form perceives:
Where is your mighty chief?

1st Mystic. Above, around you, and beneath.

Ethw. Has he no form to vision sensible?

1st Mystic. In the night's noon, in the winter's noon, in the lustre's noon:
Of times twice ten within the century's round
Is he before our leagued bands confess'd
In dread appearance:
But in what form or in what circumstance
May not be told; he dies who utters it.

'Ethw. *shrinks at this, and seems somewhat appalled. The* Arch Sister, *after tossing about her arms and writhing her body in a violent agitation, fixes her eyes, like one waked from a dream, stedfastly upon* Ethw. *then going suddenly up to him, grasps him by the hand with energy.*)

Arch Sist. Thou who would'st pierce the deep and awful shade
Of dark futurity, to know the state
Of after greatness waiting on thy will,
For in thy power acceptance or rejection
Is freely put, lift up thine eyes and say,
What see'st thou yonder.
(*pointing to a dark arched opening in the roof of the cave, where an illuminated crown and sceptre appears.*)

Ethw. (*starting.*) Ha! e'en the inward vision of my soul
In actual form pourtray'd! (*his eyes bright'ning wonderfully.*)
Say'st thou it shall be mine?

Arch Sist. As thou shalt choose.

Ethw. I ask of thee no more.
(*stands gazing upon the appearance, till it fades away.*)
So soon extinguish'd? Hath this too a meaning?
It says, perhaps, my greatness shall be short.

Arch Sist. I speak to thee no further than I may,
Therefore be satisfied.

Ethw. And I am satisfied. Dread mystic maid,
Receive my thanks.

Arch Sist. Nay, Ethwald, our commission ends not here:
Stay and behold what follows.
(*the stage becomes suddenly dark, and most terrible shrieks, and groans, and dismal lamentations, are heard from the farther end of the cave.*)

Ethw. What horrid sounds are these?

Arch Sist. The varied voice of woe, of Mercia's woe:
Of those who shall, beneath thine iron hand,
The cup of mis'ry drink. There, dost thou hear
The dungeon'd captives' sighs, the shrilly shrieks
Of childless mothers and distracted maids,
Mix'd with the heavy groans of dying men?
The widow's wailings, too; and infant's cries—
(Ethw. *stops his ears in horrour.*)
Ay, stop thine ears; it is a horrid sound.

Ethw. Forfend that e'er again I hear the like!
What didst thou say? O, thou didst foully say!
Do I not know my nature? heav'n and earth
As soon shall change——
(*A voice above.*) Swear not!
(*A voice beneath.*) Swear not!
(*A voice on the same level, but distant.*) Swear not!

Arch Sist. Now, once again, and our commission ends.
Look yonder, and behold that shadowy form.
(*pointing to an arched recess, across which bursts a strong light, and discovers a crowned phantom, covered with wounds, and representing by its gestures one in agony.* Ethw. *looks and shrinks back.*)
What dost thou see?

Ethw. A miserable man: his breast is pierced
With many wounds, and yet his gestures seem
The agony of a distracted mind
More than of pain.

Arch Sist. But wears he not a crown?

Ethw. Why does it look so fix'dly on me thus?
What are its woes to me?

Arch Sist. They are thy own.
Know'st thou no traces of that alter'd form,
Nor see'st that crown'd phantom is thyself?

Ethw. (*shudders then after a pause.*)
I may be doom'd to meet a tyrant's end
But not to be a tyrant.
Did all the powers of hell attest the doom,
I would belie it. Know I not my nature?
By every dreaded power and hallow'd thing—
(*Voice over the stage.*) Swear not!
(*Voice under the stage.*) Swear not!
(*Distant voice off the stage*) Swear not!
(*A thundering noise is heard under ground. The stage becomes instantly quite dark, and

Mystics *and* Spirits, *&c. disappear*, Ethw. *and* Eth. *remaining alone.*)

Eth. (*after a pause.*) How art thou?

Ethw. Is it thy voice? O, let me feel thy grasp!
Mine ears ring strangely, and my head doth feel
As tho' I were bereaved of my wits.
Are they all gone? Where is thy hand, I pray?
We've had a fearful bout!

Eth. Thy touch is cold as death: let us ascend
And breathe the upper air.* [Exeunt.

Scene IV.—A Forest.

Enter Ethwald with a bow in his hand, and a boy carrying his arrows.

Ethw. (*looking off the stage.*) Ha! Alwy, soon return'd, and with him comes
My faithful Ongar.

Enter Alwy and Ongar with bows also, as if in quest of sport, by the opposite side.

Thou comest, Alwy, with a busy face.
(*to* Boy.)
Go, Boy; I shot mine arrow o'er those elms,
Thou'lt find it far beyond. [Exit Boy.
Now, friend, what tidings?

Alwy. Within the tufted centre of the wood
The friendly chiefs are met, thus, like ourselves
As careless ramblers guised, all to a man
Fix'd in your cause. Their followers too are firm;
For, much disgusted with the monkish face
Their feeble monarch wears, a warlike leader,
Far, far inferior to the noble Ethwald,
May move them as he lists.

Ethw. That time and circumstances on me call
Imperiously, I am well assured.
Good Ongar, what say'st thou? how thrives thy part
Of this important task?

Ong. Well as your heart could wish. At the next council,
Held in the royal chamber, my good kinsman
Commands the guard, and will not bar our way.

Ethw. May I depend on this?

Ong. You may, my Lord.

Ethw. Thanks to thee, Ongar! this is noble service,
And shall be nobly thank'd. There is, good Alwy,
Another point; hast thou unto the chiefs,
Yet touch'd upon it?

Alwy. Yes, and they all agree 'tis most expedient
That with Elburga's hand, since weaker minds
Are blindly wedded to the royal line,
Your right be strengthen'd.

Ethw. And this they deem expedient?

Alwy. You sigh, my lord; she is, indeed, less gentle——

Ethw. Regard it not, it is a passing thought,
And it will have its sigh, and pass away.
(*turning away for a little space, and then coming forward again*)
What means hast thou devised, that for a term
Selred and Ethelbert may be remov'd?
For faithful to the royal line they are,
And will not swerve: their presence here were dang'rous:
We must employ them in some distant strife.

Alwy. I have devis'd a plan, but for the means
Brave Ongar here stands pledged. Woggarwolfe,
Who once before unweetingly has served us,
Will do the same again.

Ethw. How so? 'tis said that since his last affray
With the keen torment of his wounds subdu'd,
On sick bed laid by the transforming pow'rs
Of artful monks, he has become most saintly.

Alwy. Well, but we trust his saintship ne'ertheless
May still be lur'd to do a sinner's work.
To burn the castle of a hateful heretic
Will make amends for all his bloody deeds:
You catch the plan: Nay, Hexulf and his priest
Will be our help-mates here. Smile not; good Ongar
Has pledged his word for this.

Ethw. And I will trust to it. This will, indeed,
Draw off the Thanes in haste. But who is near?
Sculking behind yon thicket stands a man:
See'st thou? (*pointing off the stage.*)

Alwy. Go to him, Ongar, scan him well,
And if his face betrays a list'ner's guilt—
Thou hast thy dagger there?

Ong. Yes, trust me well.

Ethw. Nay, Ongar, be not rash in shedding blood!
Let not one drop be spilt that may be spar'd.
Secure him if he wear a list'ner's face:
We are too strong for stern and ruthless caution. [Exit Ongar.
I'm glad he is withdrawn a little space,
Ere we proceed to join the leagued chiefs.
Hast thou agreed with Cuthbert? Is he sure?

Alwy. Sure. 'Tis agreed when next the Ethling hunts,
To lead him in the feigned quest of game
From his attendants; there, in ambush laid,

* I will not take upon me to say that, if I had never read Shakspeare's Macbeth, I should have thought of bringing Ethwald into a cavern under ground to inquire his destiny, though I believe this desire to look into futurity (particularly in a superstitious age) is a very constant attendant on ambition; but I hope the reader will not find in the above scene any offensive use made of the works of that great master.

Cuthbert and his adherents seize upon him,
And will conduct him with the ev'ning's close
To Arrick's rugged tower. All is prepar'd.

Ethw. But hast thou charged him well that this be done
With all becoming care and gentleness,
That nothing may his noble nature gall
More than the hard necessity compels?

Alwy. Do not mistrust us so! your brow is dark:
At Edward's name your changing countenance
Is ever clouded. (Ethw. *turns from him agitated.*)
You are disturb'd, my Lord.

Ethw. I am disturb'd. (*turning round and grasping* Alwy *by the hand.*)
I'll tell thee, Alwy—yes—I am disturb'd—
No gleam of glory thro' my prospect breaks,
But still his image, 'thwart the brightness cast,
Shades it to night.

Alwy. It will be always so: but wherefore should it?
Glory is ever bought by those who earn it
With loss of many lives most dear and precious.
So is it destin'd. Let that be unto him
Which in the crowded beach or busy field
All meet regardless from a foe-man's hand.
Doth the still chamber, and the muffled tread,
And th' unseen stroke that doth the infliction deal,
Alter its nature?

Ethw. (*pushing* Alwy *away from him vehemently, and putting up both his hands to his head.*)
Forbear! forbear! I shut mine eyes, mine ears;
All entrance bar that may into my mind
Th' abhorred thing convey. Have I not said,
Thou shalt not dare in word, in look, in gesture,
In slightest indication of a thought,
Hold with my mind such base communication?
By my sword's strength! did I not surely think
From this bold seizure of the sov'reign power,
A pow'r for which I must full dearly pay,
So says the destiny that o'er me hangs,
To shield his weakness and restore again
In room of Mercia's crown a nobler sway,
Won by my sword, I would as lief——Northumberland
Invites my arms, and soon will be subdu'd;
Of this full sure, a good amends may be
To noble Edward made.

Alwy. (*who during the last part of* Ethw's *speech has been smiling behind his back malignantly.*)
O yes, full surely:
And wand'ring harpers shall in hall and bower
Sing of the marv'llous deed.

Ethw. (*turning short upon him and perceiving his smile.*)
Thou smilest, methinks.
Full well I read the meaning of that look:
'Tis a fiend's smile, and it will prove a false one.
(*turning away angrily, whilst* Alwy *walks to the bottom of the stage.*)
(*Aside, looking suspiciously after him.*) Have I offended him? he is an agent
Most needful to me. (*aloud, advancing to him.*)
Good Alwy, anxious minds will often chide—
(*Aside, stopping short.*) He hears me not, or is it but a feint?

Alwy. (*looking off the stage.*) Your arrow-boy returns.

Ethw. (*aside, nodding to himself.*) No, 'tis a free and unoffended voice;
I'm wrong. This is a bird whose fleshed beak
The prey too strongly scents to fly away:
I'll spare my courtesies (*aloud.*) What say'st thou, Alwy?

Alwy. (*pointing.*) Your arrow-boy.

Ethw. I'm glad he is return'd.

Re-enter Boy.

Boy. No where, my Lord, can I the arrow find.

Ethw. Well, boy, it matters not; let us move on. [Exeunt.

Scene V.—A narrow gallery in an abbey or cloister, with several doors opening into it.

Enter Hexulf and Ongar and Two Monks.

Hex. Fear not, brave Ongar, we, upon thy hint,
Will quickly act; for here our eager wishes
Are with the Church's good most closely join'd.

First Monk. This is the time when he should walk abroad.
(*listening.*) I hear him at his door.

Hex. Leave us, good Ongar.

Ong. To your good skill I do commit it then;
Having but only you, most rev'rend father,
To take my part against this wizard Thane.

First Monk. (*still listening.*) Begone, he issues forth. [Exit Ongar.
(*one of the doors opens slowly, and enters* Woggarwolfe, *wrapped in a cloak and his head bound.*)

Hex. Good-morrow, valiant Thane, whose pious gifts
Have won heav'n's grace to renovate thy strength,
And grant thee longer life, how goes thy health?

Wog. I thank you, rev'rend father, greatly mended.

First Monk. The prayers of holy men have power to save,
E'en on the very borders of the tomb,
The humbled soul who doth with gifts enrich
The holy church.

Second Monk. Didst thou not feel within thee
A peaceful calm, a cheering confidence,
Soon as thy pious offering was accepted?

Wog. (*hesitating.*) Yes, rev'rend fathers,—

I have thought indeed—
Perhaps you meant it so—that since that time
The devil has not scar'd me in my dreams
So oft as he was wont, when sore with wounds
I first was laid upon my bed of pain.

Hex. Ay, that is much; but, noble Woggarwolfe,
Thinkest thou not the church doth merit well
Some stable gift, some fix'd inheritance?
Thou hast those lands that are so nearly join'd
Unto St. Alban's abbey.

Wog. (*much surprised.*) My lands! give up my lands?

First Monk. What are thy lands
Compar'd to that which they will purchase for thee?

Sec. Monk. To lay thy coffin'd body in the ground,
Rob'd in the garb of holy men, and bless'd?

First Monk. To have thy tomb beneath the shading arch
Of sacred roof, where nought profane may enter;
Whilst midnight spirits stand and yell without,
But o'er the sacred threshold dare not trespass.

Wog. (*with a rueful countenance.*)
What, do you think I shall be dead so soon?

Hex. Life is uncertain; but how glorious, Thane,
To look beyond this wicked world of strife,
And for thyself a lofty seat provide
With saints and holy men, and angel bands!

Wog. Nay, father, I am not so highly bent;
Do but secure me from the horrid fangs
Of the terrific fiend: I am not proud;
That will suffice me.

Hex. Nay, herein thy humility we praise not,
And much I fear, at such a humble pitch,
He who so lately scar'd thee in thy dreams
May reach thee still.

First Monk. O think of this!

Hex. Dreadful it is, thou know'st,
To see him in thy dreams; but when awake,
Naked, and all uncloth'd of flesh and blood,
As thou at last must be; how wilt thou bear
To see him yelling o'er thee as his prey?
Bearing aloft his dark and hideous form;
Grinding his horrid jaws, and darting on thee
His eyes of vivid fire? (*The* Monks *sign themselves with great marks of fear, and* Woggarwolfe *looks terrified.*)
Ah! think'st thou, Thane,
That many gifts, ay, half of all thou'rt worth,
Would dearly purchase safety from such terrours?

Wog. (*in a quick perturbed voice.*)
I have the plunder of two neighb'ring chiefs,
Whom I surprised within their towers and slew;
I'll give you all—if that suffices not,
I'll fall upon a third, ay, tho' it were
My next of kin, nor spare of all his goods
One fragment for myself. O holy fathers!
I humbly crave saintly protection of you.

Hex. Nay, Woggarwolfe, on shrines of holy saints
No gift ere works with efficacious power
By force and violence gain'd; unless, indeed,
It be the spoil of some unsaintly Thane,
Some faithless wizard or foul heretic.
Thou hast a neighbour, impious Ethelbert;
His towers to burn and consecrate his spoils,
O'er all thy sins would cast a sacred robe,
On which nor fiend nor devil durst fix a fang.
But now thou lackest strength for such a work,
And may'st be dead ere thou hast time to do it:
Therefore I counsel thee, give up thy lands.

Wog. O, no! I'm strong enough: my men are strong.
Give us your rev'rend blessings o'er our heads,
And we'll set out forthwith.

Hex. Then nothing doubt that on your worthy zeal
Will fall the blessing. Let us onward move.
Where are thy followers? [Exeunt Hex. *talking busily to* Wog. *and the* Monks *smiling to one another as they go out.*)

Scene VI.—the royal apartment: the king is discovered with hexulf, the seneschal, and several friends or counsellors, seated round a council table.

King. (*as if continuing to speak.*)
It may be so: youth finds no obstacle;
But I am old.
Full many a storm on this grey head has beat;
And now, on my high station do I stand,
Like the tired watchman in his air-rock'd tower,
Who looketh for the hour of his release.
I'm sick of worldly broils, and fain would rest
With those who war no more. One gleam of light
Did sweetly cheer the ev'ning of my day:
Edward, my son! he was the kindliest prop
That age did ever rest on—he is gone,
What should I fight for now?

Sen. For thine own honour; for the weal of Mercia,
With weapons in our hands, and strong in men,
Who to the royal standard soon will flock,
If summon'd by thy firm and general orders,
Shall these men be our masters? Heaven forfend!
Five thousand warriors might disperse the foe,
Even with that devil Ethwald at their head;
And shall we think of granting to those rebels
Their insolent demands?

King. Good Seneschal, if that you think our strength
Permits us still in open fields to strive
With hope of good, I am not yet so old
But I can brace these stiffen'd limbs in iron,
And do a soldier's service. (*to 2d* Coun.) Thane of Mordath,
Thy visage light'neth not upon these hopes;
What are thy thoughts?

Sec. Coun. E'en that these hopes will bring us to a state
'Reft of all hope.

The rebel chiefs but seek their own enrichment,
Not Ethwald's exaltation, good my Lord;
Bribe them, and treat for peace. Lack you the means;
The church, for whose enriching you have rais'd
This storm, can well supply it; and most surely
Will do it cheerfully. (*turning to* Hexulf.)

Hex. No, by the holy mass! that were to bring
The curse of heav'n upon our impious heads.
To spoil the holy church is sacrilege:
And to advise such spoil in anywise
Is sacrilegious and abominable.

First Coun. I am as faithful to the holy church
As thou art, angry priest. I do defy thee—

Sen. What, have ye no respect unto the king?
I do command you, peace. Who now intrudes?

Enter a SERVANT in great terrour.

Serv. The rebel force! the castle is surprised!
They are at hand—they have o'erpower'd the guard.

Sec. Coun. Pray God thou liest! I think it cannot be. (*they all rise up alarmed.*)

Serv. It is as true as I do tread this spot.

Enter a SOLDIER wounded.

King. (*to* Sol.) Ha! what say'st thou? thou bearest for thy words
A rueful witness.

Sol. Take arms, and save the king, if it be possible.
The rebel chieftains have the gates surprised,
And gain'd, below, the entrance of this tower.
They struggled for the pass; sharp was the broil;
This speaks for me, that I have borne my part.
(*falls down exhausted.*)

Hex. (*to* King.) Retire, my Lord, into the higher chamber.
Your arm can give but small assistance here.
Until this horrid visit be o'erpast,
You may conceal yourself.

King. No, father, never shall the king of Mercia
Be, from his hiding-place, like a mean man
Pull'd forth. But, noble friends, it seems not wise
That this necessity should reach to you.
These rebels seek my life, and with that life
They will be satisfied. In my defence,
Thus taken as we are, all stand were useless;
Therefore if now you will obey your king,
His last command, retire and save your lives
For some more useful end. Finding me here,
They will no farther search: retire, my friends.

Sec. Coun. What, leave our king to face his foes alone?

King. No, not alone; my friend the Seneschal
Will stay with me. We have been young together,
And the same storms in our rough day of life
Have beat upon us: be it now God's will,
We will lay down our aged heads together
In the still rest, and bid good night to strife.
Have I said well, my friend?
(*holding out his hand to the* Seneschal.)

Sen. (*kissing his hand with great warmth, and putting one knee to the ground.*)
O my lov'd master! many a bounteous favour
Has shower'd upon me from your royal hand,
But ne'er before was I so proudly honour'd.
(*rising up with assumed grace.*
Retire, young men, for now I must be proud;
Retire, your master will confront the foe
As may become a king.

(*All calling out at once.*) No, no! we will not leave him.

(*they all range themselves, drawing their swords, round the* King, *and the old* Seneschal *stands, by pre-eminence, close to his master's side.*)

Sec. Coun. Here is a wall through which they first must force
A bloody way, ere on his royal head
One silver hair be scath'd.

Enter ETHWALD, ALWY, and the CONSPIRATORS.

Alwy. Now vengeance for injustice and oppression!

Sec. Coun. On your own heads, then, be it, miscreant chiefs!

(*they fight round the* King: *his party defend him bravely, till many more* Conspirators *enter, and it is overpowered.*)

Ethw. (*aside, angrily, to* Alwy, *on still seeing the* King *standing in the midst, unhurt, and, with great dignity, the* Seneschal *by his side, and no one offering to attack him.*)
Hast thou forgot? Where are thy chosen men?
Is there no hand to do the needful work?
This is but children's play. (*to some of his party.*)
Come, let us search, that in the neigh'bring chamber,
No lurking foe escape. [EXIT *with some* Followers.

Alwy. (*giving a sign to his* Followers *and going up insolently to the* King.)
Oswal, resign thy sword.

Sen. First take thou mine, thou base, ignoble traitor.

(*Giving* Alwy *a blow with his sword, upon which* Alwy *and his* Followers *fall upon the* King *and the* Seneschal, *and, surrounding them on every side, kill them, with many wounds, the crowd gathering so close round them, that their fall cannot be seen.*)

(*Re-enter* Ethwald, *and the crowd opening on each side, shows the dead bodies of the* King *and the* Seneschal.)

Ethw. (*affecting surprise.*) What sight is this?
Ah! ye have gone too far. Who did this deed?

Alwy. My followers, much enraged at slight offence,
Did fall upon him.
Ethw. All have their end decreed, and this, alas!
Has been his fated hour.
Come, chiefs and valiant friends, why stand we here
Looking on that which cannot be repair'd?
All honour shall be paid unto the dead.
And, were this deed of any single hand
The willing crime, he should have vengeance too.
But let us now our nightly task fulfil;
Much have we still to do ere morning dawn.
[Exeunt Ethw. *and* Followers, *and the scene closes.*

SCENE VII.—A ROYAL APARTMENT:

Enter Elburga, with her hair scattered upon her shoulders, and with the action of one in violent grief, followed by Dwina, who seems to be soothing her.

Elb. Cease, cease! thy foolish kindness soothes me not:
My morning is o'ercast; my glory sunk:
Leave me alone to wring my hands and weep.
Dwi. O, no, my princely mistress! grieve not thus!
Over our heads the blackest clouds do pass,
And brighter follow them.
Elb. No, no! my sky is night! I was a princess,
Almost a queen: in gorgeous pomp beheld,
The public gaze was ever turn'd on me:
Proud was the highest Thane or haughtiest dame
To do my bidding: ev'ry count'nance watch'd
Each changeful glance of my commanding eye,
To read its meaning: now my state is chang'd;
Scoffing and insult and degrading pity
Abide the daughter of a murder'd king.
Heaven's vengeance light upon them all! Begone!
I hate the very light for looking on me!
Begone, and soothe me not!
Dwi. Forgive me, princess; do not thus despair;
King Oswal's daughter many friends will find.
Elb. Friends! hold thy peace!—Oh it doth rend my heart!
I have been wont to talk of subjects, vassals,
Dependants, servants, slaves, but not of friends.
Where shall I hide my head?
Dwi. Surely, dear mistress, with Saint Cuthbert's nuns,
Whose convent by your father's gifts is rich,
You will protection find. There quiet rest,
And holy converse of those pious maids,
After a while will pour into your mind
Soft consolation. (*putting her hand on* Elburga's *soothingly.*)
Elb. (*pushing her away.*)
Out upon thee, fool! Go, speak thy comforts
To spirits tame and abject as thyself:
They make me mad; they make me thus to tear
My scatter'd locks and strew them to the winds. (*tearing her hair distractedly.*)

Enter a Servant.

What brings thee here? (*to* Ser.)
Ser. Ethwald, the king, is at the gate, and asks
To be admitted to your presence, princess.
Elb. (*becoming suddenly calm.*)
What, Ethwald, say'st thou? say'st thou truly so?
Ser. Yes, truly, princess.
Elb. Ethwald, that Thane whom thou dost call the king?
Ser. Yes, he whom all the states and chiefs of Mercia
Do call the king.
Elb. He enters not. Tell him I am unwell,
And will not be disturb'd. [Exit *Ser.*
What seeks he here? Fie, poorly fainting soul!
Rouse! rouse thee up! To all the world beside
Subdued and humbled would I rather be
Than in the eyes of this proud man.

Re-enter Ser.

What say'st thou?
Is he departed?
Ser. No, he will not depart, but bids me say
The entrance he has begg'd he now commands.
I hear his steps behind me.

Enter Ethwald.

(Elburga *turns away from him proudly.*)
Ethw. Elburga, turn and look upon a friend.
Elb. (*turning round haughtily, and looking on him with an assumed expression of anger and scornful contempt.*)
Usurping rebel, who hast slain thy master;
Take thou a look that well beseems thy worth,
And hie thee hence, false traitor!
Ethw. Yes, I will hie me hence, and with me lead
A fair and beauteous subject to my will;
That will which may not be gainsaid. For now
High Heaven, that hath decreed thy father's fall,
Hath also me appointed king of Mercia,
With right as fair as his; which I'll maintain,
And by the proudest in this lordly realm
Will be obey'd, even by thy lofty self.
Elb. Put shackles on my limbs, and o'er my head
Let your barr'd dungeons low'r; then may'st thou say,
"Walk not abroad," and so it needs must be:
But think'st thou to subdue, bold as thou art,
The lofty spirit of king Oswal's daughter?
Go, bind the wild winds in thy hollow shield,
And bid them rage no more: they will obey thee.
Ethw. Yes, proud Elburga, I will shackle thee.
But on the throne of Mercia shalt thou sit,
Not in the dungeon's gloom.

Ay, and, albeit the wild winds do refuse
To be subjected to my royal will,
The lofty spirit of king Oswal's daughter
I will subdue. (*taking her hand.*)

Elb. (*throwing him off from her vehemently.*) Off with those bloody hands that slew my father!
Thy touch is horrid to me! 'tis a fiend's grasp:
Out from my presence! bloody Thane of Mairneath!

Ethw. Ay, frown on me, Elburga; proudly frown:
I knew thy haughty spirit, and I lov'd it,
Even when I saw thee first in gorgeous state;
When, bearing high thy stately form, thou stoodst
Like a proud queen, and on the gazing crowd,
Somewhat offended with a late neglect,
Darted thy looks of anger and disdain.
High Thanes and Dames shrunk from thine eye, whilst I,
Like one who from the mountain's summit sees
Beneath him far the harmless lightning play,
With smiling admiration mark'd thee well,
And own'd a kindred soul. Each angry flash,
Of thy dark eye was loveliness to me.
But know, proud maid, my spirit outmasters thine,
And heedeth not the anger nor the power
Of living thing.

Elb. Bold and amazing man!

Ethw. And bold should be the man who weds Elburga.

Elb. Away! it cannot be, it shall not be!
My soul doth rise against thee, bloody chief,
And bids thy power defiance.

Ethw. Then art thou mine in truth, for never yet
Did hostile thing confront me unsubdued:
Defy me and thou'rt conquer'd.

Elb. Thou most audacious chief! it shall not be.

Ethw. It shall, it must be, maiden, I have sworn it;
And here repeat it on that beauteous hand
Which to no power but with my life I'll yield.
(*grasping her hand firmly which she struggles to free.*)
Frown not, Elburga! 'tis in vain to strive;
My spirit outmasters thine.

Elb. Say'st thou to me thou didst not slay my father?
Say'st thou those hands are guiltless of his death?

Ethw. Think'st thou I'll plead, and say I have not slain
A weak old man, whose inoffensive mind,
And strong desire to quit the warring world
For quiet religious rest, could be, in truth,
No hindrance to my greatness? were this fitting
In Mercia's king, and proud Elburga's lord?

Elb. (*turning away.*)
Elburga's lord! Thou art presumptuous, prince:
Go hence, and brave me not.

Ethw. I will go hence forthwith; and, by my side,
The fair selected partner of my throne,
I'll lead where the assembled chiefs of Mercia
Wait to receive from me their future queen.

Elb. Distract me not!

Ethw. Resistance is distraction.
Who ever yet my fixed purpose cross'd?
Did Ethwald ever yield? Come, queen of Mercia!
This firm grasp shall conduct thee to a throne:
(*taking her hand, which she feebly resists.*)
Come forth, the frowning, haughty bride of Ethwald.

Elb. Wonderful man!
If hell or fortune fight for thee I know not,
Nothing withstands thy power.

(EXEUNT Ethw. *leading off* Elb. *in triumph, and* Dwina *following with her hands and eyes raised to heaven in astonishment.*)

ACT V.

SCENE I.—AN ARCHED PASSAGE FROM A GATEWAY IN THE ROYAL CASTLE. THE SOUND OF WARLIKE MUSIC WITHOUT.

Enter ETHELBERT and SELRED with their FOLLOWERS, as if just come from a long march: Enter, by the opposite side, ALWY, upon which they halt, the foremost of the FOLLOWERS but just appearing under the gateway.

Alwy. Welcome, most valiant chieftains! Fame reports
That crown'd with full success ye are return'd.

Eth. Good sooth we boast but little of our arms!
Tho' Woggarwolfe, our base ignoble spoiler,
Wounded and sorely shent, we've left behind,
Again in cloister'd walls with ghostly men,
Winding his soul, with many a heavy groan,
Into a saintly frame; God speed the work!
We are but just in time to save our halls.

Sel. It is a shame that such a ruffian thief
Should thus employ the arms of warlike Thanes.

Alwy. In truth it is, but now there reigns in Mercia
A warlike king, who better knows to deal
With valiant men. The messenger inform'd you?

Sel. He did; yet, be it own'd, to call him king
Sounds strangely in our ears. How died king Oswal?

Eth. (*to* Sel.) Patience, my friend! good time will shew thee all.
Yet pray inform us, Alwy, ere we part,
Where is young Edward? In these late commotions
What part had he?

Alwy. Would to the holy saints I could inform you!
Reports there are, incongruous and absurd—

Some say, in hunting from his followers stray'd,
Passing at dusk of eve a high-swoln stream,
Therein he perish'd; others do maintain
That, loathing greatness, he conceals himself
In some lone cave: But, as I bear a heart
True to king Ethwald and the public weal,
I know of him no more.

Sel. Thou liest!

Eth. (*pulling back* Selred.) Peace, art thou mad?

Alwy. (*pretending not to hear.*) What said brave Selred?

Eth. A hasty exclamation of no meaning.

Alwy. I must away and bear the welcome tidings
Of your arrival to the royal ear.

Eth. But stop, before thou go'st I fain would know
How far'd Elburga in the passing storm?
Where has she refuge found?

Alwy. Within these walls; she is the queen of Mercia.

Eth. I am indebted to thee. (Exit Alwy.

Sel. (*staring with surprise upon* Ethelbert.)
What dost thou think of this? Did we hear truly?
To the usurper of her father's crown,
And if our fears be true, his murd'rer too!
To him! O most unnatural!

Eth. Ay, so it is. As one who ventures forth
After an earthquake's awful visitation,
The country round in strange unwonted guise
Beholds; here swelling heights and herby knolls,
Where smok'd the cottage and the white flocks browz'd,
Sunk into turbid pools; there rifted rocks,
With all their shaggy woods upon their sides,
In the low bosom of the flowery vale
Resting uncouthly—even so does he,
Who looks abroad after the storms of state,
Strange changes see; unnatural and strange.

Sel. It makes my spirit boil—the gentle Edward!
So gently brave!

Eth. Yes, there is cause of grief
And indignation too: but Ethwald reigns,
Howe'er he gain'd his height, and he possesses
The qualities that suit his lofty station.
With them I fear he has his passions also,
Hostile to public good: be it our part
To use the influence we still retain
O'er his ambitious mind for Mercia's weal!
This is our duty now.

Sel. I'll take thy counsel. (*to the* Soldiers.)
Follow, weary comrades.

[Exeunt Eth. *and* Sel. *and their* Followers, *marching across the stage.*

Scene II.—A royal apartment.

Elburga, as Queen, discovered sitting on a chair of state, with Dwina, Ladies, and Officers of State attending.

Elb. We've waited long: how goes the day? know'st thou?
(*to* First Officer.)

First. Offi. As comes the light across this arched roof
From those high windows, it should wear, methinks,
Upon noon day.

Elb. and the procession to the royal chapel
Should at this hour begin. The king, perchance,
Is with affairs detain'd: go thou and see.
[Exit First Officer.
I am impatient now. (*voice heard without.*)
What voice is that?

First SONG *without.*

Hark! the cock crows, and the wind blows,
Away, my love, away!
Quick, d'on thy weeds and tell thy beads.
For soon it will be day.

First. Lad. 'Tis sadly wild.

Dwin. 'Tis sad but wond'rous sweet.
Who may it be? List, list! she sings again.

Second SONG *without.*

Where lay'st thou thy careless head?
On the cold heath is my bed.
Where the moor-cock shuts his wing,
And the brown snake weaves his ring.
Safe and fearless will I be,
The coiled adder stings not me.

Elb. (*rising displeased from her seat.*)
Call those who wait without. What may this mean?

Enter an Attendant.

Whose voice is that which in a day of joy
Such plaintive music makes?

Atten. Pardon, my royal dame! be not offended!
'Tis a poor maid bereaved of her mind.
Rent are her robes, her scatter'd locks unbound,
Like one who long thro' rugged ways hath stray'd,
Beat with the surly blast; but never yet,
Tho' all so sorely shent, did I behold
A fairer maid. She aims at no despite:
She's wild, but gentle.

Dwi. O hark again!

Third SONG *without.*

* Once upon my cheek
He said the roses grew,
But now they're wash'd away
With the cold ev'ning dew.

For I wander thro' the night,
When all but me take rest,
And the moon's soft beams fall piteously
Upon my troubled breast.
(*a pause.*)

* For this third Song, which is the only literary assistance either in verse or prose that I have ever received, I am indebted to the pen of a friend.

Fourth SONG.

Ah, maiden! bear the biting smart,
Nor thus thy loss deplore;
The Thane's daughter has his heart,
He will return no more.

First Lad. 'Tis strangely melancholy.

Dwi. 'Tis like the mournful sounds which oftentimes
The midnight watcher, in his lonely tower,
Hears, with the wailing blast most sweetly mingled.

Elb. (*to* Attendant.) Go thou and lead her hither.

Atten. I will, great queen.—But here she comes unbidden.

Enter BERTHA with a wild unsettled air, and her hair scattered upon her shoulders. The LADIES gather about her with curiosity:

First Lad. How fair she is!

Sec. Lad. Her eyes of lovely blue,
Gentle but restless. Dost thou see that glance? (*to* Sec. Lad.)
I fear to look upon her.

Dwi. Fie, fie, upon it! press not near her thus:
She seems offended: I will speak to her.
(*to* Berth.) Sweet Lady, art thou sad?
(Bertha *looks stedfastly at her, then drops her head upon her breast and makes no answer.*)
We would be kind to thee.
(Berth. *then looks more gently on her, but is still silent.*)

First Lad. Dost thou not speak, thou who canst sing so well?

Dwi. Who taught thee those sweet notes?

Berth. The night was dark: I met spirits on my way:
They sung me sweet songs, but they were sorrowful.

Dwi. Ah, woe is me! and dost thou wander, then,
In the dark night alone, no one to tend thee?

Berth. When the moon's dark, I follow the night-bird's cry,
And it doth guide my way.—But he'll return,
So do they tell me, when sweet violets blow
And summer comes again.

Dwi. And who is he?

Berth. List, and the winds will tell thee as they pass:
The stilly air will whisper it. But softly,
Tell it to none again. They must not know
How stern he is, for he was gentle once.

Dwi. A cruel heart had he who could forsake thee!

Ber. (*putting her hand eagerly on* Dwina's *mouth.*)
Hush, hush! we'll not offend him. He is great,
And must not be offended.

Elb. (*coming near her.*) What, say'st thou he is great?
Rent are thy weeds and thin thy ruffled robe:
Why didst thou leave thy home thus unprotected?

Berth. (*turning hastily upon her.*)
I saw his banner streaming in the air,
And I did follow it.

Elb. His banner in the air! What is thy love?

Berth. (*looking fiercely at her.*)
They say he is a king.

Elb. (*smiling.*) Poor maid! 'tis ever thus with such as she;
They still believe themselves of some high state,
And mimick greatness.

Berth. Thou art a fair dame and a gay—but go;
Take off thine eyes from me; I love thee not.
(*Shrinks from* Elburga, *walking backwards and looking frowningly at her; then beckoning to* Dwina, *she speaks in her ear.*)
They say a royal dame has won his faith,
Stately and proud. But in a gloomy dream
I heard it first, confused and terrible:
And oft-times, since, the fiend of night repeats it,
As on my pressed breast he sits and groans.
I'll not believe it.

Dwi. What is thy name, sweet Lady?

Berth. (*rubbing her hand across her forehead as if trying to recollect.*)
I had a name that kind friends call'd me by;
And with a blessing did the holy man
Bestow it on me. But I've wander'd far
Thro' wood and wilds, and strangely on my head
The 'numbing winds have beat, and I have lost it
Be not offended with me——
For, Lady, thou art gentle, and I fear thee.
(*bowing submissively to Dwina.*)

Enter ETHELBERT.

Eth. (*to* Dwina, *after looking at* Bertha.)
What maid is that so haggard and so wild?

Dwi. A wand'ring maniac, but so fair and gentle
Thou needs must speak to her.

Eth. (*going up to* Berth.) Fair Lady, wilt thou suffer—gracious heaven!
What see I here! the sweet and gentle Bertha!
Ah, has it come to this? alas, alas!
Sweet maiden, dost thou know me?

Berth. (*after looking earnestly at him.*)
I know thee well enough. They call thee mad;
Thy wild and raving words oft made the ears
Of holy men to tingle.

Eth. She somewhat glances at the truth. Alas!
I've seen her gay and blooming as the rose,
And cheerful, too, as song of early lark.
I've seen her prattle on her nurse's lap,
Innocent bud! and now I see her thus. (*weeps.*)

Berth. Ah! dost thou weep? are they unkind to thee? (*shaking her head.*)
Yes, yes! from out the herd, like a mark'd deer,

They drive the poor distraught. The storms of heaven
Beat on him: gaping hinds stare at his woe;
And no one stops to bid heav'n speed his way.

Eth. (*flourish of trumpets.*) Sweet maid, retire.

Berth. Nay, nay! I will not go: there be without
Those who will frown upon me.

Eth. (*endeavouring to lead her off.*)
I pray thee be entreated!

(Dwina *takes hold of her also to lead her off, but she breaks from them furiously.*)

Berth. Ye shall not force me! Wist ye, who I am?
The whirlwind in its strength contends with me,
And I o'ermaster it.

Eth. Stand round her then, I pray you, gentle ladies!
The king must not behold her.

(*the* Ladies *gather round* Bertha *and conceal her.*)

Enter ETHWALD, followed by THANES and ATTENDANTS.

Ethw. (*after returning the obeisance of the assembly.*)
This gay and fair attendance on our person
And on our queen, most honour'd lords and dames,
We much regard; and could my heart express—

(Bertha *hearing his voice shrieks out.*)

What cry is that?

Dwi. Regard it not: it is a wand'ring maid,
Distracted in her mind, who is in search,
As she conceits it, of some faithless lover.
She sings sweet songs of wildest harmony,
And at the queen's command we led her in.

Ethw. Seeking her love! distracted in her mind!
Have any of my followers wrong'd her? Speak!
If so it be, by righteous heaven I swear!
The man, whoe'er he be, shall dearly rue it.

(Bertha *shrieks again, and breaking through the crowd runs up to* Ethwald. *He starts back, and covers his eyes with one hand, whilst she, catching hold of the other, presses it to her breast.*)

Berth. I've found thee now, and let the black fiend growl,
I will not part with thee. I've followed thee
Thro' crag and moor and wild. I've heard thy voice
Sound from the dark hill's side, and follow'd thee.
I've seen thee on the gath'ring twilight clouds,
Ride with the stately spirits of the storm.
But thou look'dst sternly on me.
O be not angry! I will kneel to thee;
For thou art glorious now, as I am told,
And must have worship. (*kneeling and bowing her head meekly to the ground.*)

Ethw. (*turning away.*) O God! O God!
Where art thou, Ethelbert?
Thou might'st have saved me this.

(*looking round and seeing that* Ethelbert *weeps, he also becomes softened and turns to* Bertha *with great emotion.*)

Berth. They say she's fair and glorious: woe is me!
I am but form'd as simple maidens are.
But scorn me not: I have a powerful spell,
A Druid gave it me, which on mine arm
When once enclasp'd, will make me fair as she;
So thou wilt turn to me.

Ethw. O Ethelbert! I pray thee pity me!
This sight doth move me, e'en to agony.
Remove her hence; but O deal gently with her!

(Ethelbert, *endeavours again to lead her off, and the* Ladies *crowd about her. She is then carried out, and is heard to scream as they are carrying her.*)

Ethw. (*in great disorder.*) Come, come away! we do but linger here.

(Elburga, *who, since* Ethwald's *entering, has remained in the back ground, but agitated with passions, now advances angrily to him.*)

Elb. So thou hast known this maid?

Ethw. Fie! speak not to me now.

Elb. Away, away!
Thou hast lodged softer passions in thy breast
Than I have reckon'd on.

Ethw. (*shaking her off.*) Fie! turn thy face aside, and shade thine eyes!
That no soft passion in thy bosom lives,
Is thy opprobrium, woman, and thy shame.

Elb. There are within my breast such thoughts, I trust,
As suit my lofty state.

Ethw. (*aside to* Elb.) Go, heartless pageant, go!
Lead on thy senseless show, and move me not
To do thee some despite.
(*aloud to the* Ladies.) Move on, fair dames.
(*to* Elb. *who seems unwilling to go.*)
The king commands it. (EXEUNT Elburga *and* Ladies.

First Offi. (*to* Ethw. *who stands with his eyes fixed on the ground.*)
Please you, my Lord, but if you move not also,
The ceremony will, in sooth, appear
As marr'd and cut in twain.

Ethw. What say'st thou, marshal?

First Offi. Please you, my Lord, to move?

Ethw. Ay, thou say'st well: in the soul's agony,
A meaner man might turn aside and weep.

(EXEUNT Ethw. *with part of his train, the others ranging themselves in order to follow him. A great confusion and noise is then heard without, and a voice calling out "the king is wounded." The crowd press back again in disorder, and presently re-enter* Ethw. *supported.*)

First Offi. My Lord, how is it with you?

Ethw. I fear but ill, my friend. Where is the man
That gave me this fell stroke?

First Offi. I cannot tell: they have surrounded him.

Enter Second Officer.

Sec. Offi. He is secured.

Ethw. Is it a Mercian hand?

Sec. Offi. It is, my Lord, but of no high degree.
It is the frantic stroke of a poor groom,
Who did his late Lord love; and, for that crime,
Last night, with wife and children weeping round him,
Was by your soldiers turn'd into the cold,
Houseless and bare.

Ethw. Curse on their ruffian zeal!
Torment him not, but let him die in peace.
Would I might say—. I'm very faint, my friends:
Support me hence, I pray you!
[Exeunt Ethw. *supported.*

Scene III.—A royal apartment: an open door in front, shewing an inner chamber, in which is discovered Ethwald lying upon a couch, and surrounded with the thanes and officers of his court, Selred and Ethelbert standing on each side of him.

Sel. (*after* Ethw. *has said something to him in a low voice.*)
He is too much inclosed, and longs for air:
He'll breathe more freely in the outer chamber;
Let us remove him.
(*They lift him in his couch, and bring him forward to the front of the stage.*)

First Offi. How are you now, my Lord?

Ethw. Somewhat exhausted; and albeit, good Thanes,
I greatly am indebted to your love,
For a short space I fain would be alone.

First Offi. Farewell! God send your highness rest! meantime
We'll pray for your recovery.

Sec. Offi. And heaven will hear our prayers.

(*Omnes.*) Amen, amen!

Ethw. Pray heaven to order all things for the weal
Of my good realm, and I shall be well pleased
To live or die. Adieu! [Exeunt *all but* Ethw. Selred, *and* Ethelbert. *After a pause, in which* Ethw. *seems agitated and uneasy.*
My dearest Selred, think it not unkind,
But go thou too. [Exit Selred.
(*Raising himself on the couch, and taking both the hands of* Ethelbert, *which he presses in his, looking up in his face expressively for some time before he speaks.*)
I am oppress'd. To them, even in this state,
I still must be a king: to you, my friend,
Let me put off all seeming and constraint,
And be a poor weak man. (*a pause.*) Thou speakest not.
Thy face is sad and solemn. Well I see
Thou look'st upon me as a dying wretch—
There is no hope.

Eth. Much will it profit thee
To be prepar'd as tho' there were no hope;
For if thou liv'st thou'lt live a better man,
And if thou diest, may heaven accept it of thee!

Ethw. O that it would! But, my good Ethelbert,
To be thus seized in my high career,
With all my views of glory op'ning round me—
The Western state ev'n now invites mine arms.
And half Northumberland, in little time,
Had been to Mercia join'd.

Eth. Nay, think not now, I pray thee, of these matters!
They mix uncouthly with the pious thoughts
That do become your state.

Ethw. I know it well;
But they do press so closely on my heart——
O I did think to be remember'd long!
Like those grand visitations of the earth,
That on its alter'd face for ages leave
The traces of their might. Alas, alas!
I am a powerful, but a passing storm,
That soon shall be forgotten!

Eth. I do beseech thee think of better things!

Ethw. Thou see'st I weep.—Before thee I may weep. (*dropping his head upon his breast and groaning deeply.*)
Long have I toil'd and stain'd my hands in blood
To gain pre-eminence; and now, alas!
Newly arrived at this towering height,
With all my schemes of glory rip'ning round me,
I close mine eyes in darkness, and am nothing.

Eth. What, nothing say'st thou?

Ethw. O no, Ethelbert!
I look beyond this world, and look with dread
Where all for me is fearful and unknown.
Death I have daily braved in fields of fight,
And, when a boy, oft on the air-hung bough
I've fearless trode, beneath me roaring far
The deep swoln floods, with ev'ry erring step
Instant destruction. Had I perish'd then—
Would that I had, since it has come to this!
(*raising up his hands vehemently to heaven.*)

Eth. Be not so vehement: this will endanger
The little chance thou still may'st have for life.
The God we fear is merciful.

Ethw. Ay, he is merciful; but may it reach—
O listen to me!—Oswal I have murder'd,
And Edward, brave and gentle—Ay, this bites
With a fell tooth! I vilely have enthrall'd;
Of all his rights deprived. The loving Bertha:
Too well thou know'st what I have been to her—
Ah! thinkest thou a thousand robed priests

Can pray down mercy on a soul so foul?

Eth. The inward sighs of humble penitence
Rise to the ear of heav'n when pealed hymns
Are scatter'd with the sounds of common air;
If I indeed may speak unto a king
Of low humility.

Ethw. Thy words bite keenly, friend. O king me not!
Grant me but longer life, and thou shalt see
What brave amends I'll make for past offences.
Thou thinkest hardly of me; ne'ertheless,
Rough as my warrior's life has been, good thoughts
Have sometimes harbour'd here.

(putting his hand on his heart.)

If I had lived,
It was my full intent that, in my power,
My people should have found prosperity:
I would have proved to them a gen'rous Lord.
If I had lived———Ah! think'st thou, Ethelbert,
There is indeed no hope?

Eth. I may not flatter you.

Ethw. (*holding up his clasped hands.*)
Then heav'n have mercy on a guilty soul!
Good Ethelbert, full well thou know'st that I
No coward am: from power of mortal thing
I never shrunk. O might I still contend
With spear and helm, and shield and brandish'd blade!
But I must go where spear and helm and shield
Avail not:
Where the skill'd warriour cas'd in iron, stands
Defenceless as the poor uncrusted worm.
Some do conceit that disembodied spirits
Have in them more capacity of woe
Than flesh and blood maintain. I feel appall'd:
Yes, Thane of Sexford, I do say appall'd.
For, ah! thou know'st not in how short a space
The soul of man within him may be changed.

Eth. I know it all too well. But be more calm;
Thou hast a task to do, and short perhaps
May be the time allowed thee. True repentance
With reparation of offences past
Is ever yok'd. Declare it as thy will
That Edward do succeed unto his rights:
And for poor Bertha, she shall be my charge;
I'll tend and cheer her in my quiet home.

Ethw. Thou dost prevent my boon: heaven bless thee for it!
I give thee power to do whate'er thou think'st
I, living, should have done. 'Tis all I can,
And gracious heaven accept it at my hands!

Eth. Amen, my friend! I'll faithfully fulfil
Th' important trust—Ha! how thy visage changes!
Thy mind's exertion' has outrun thy strength.
He faints away. Help! who attends without?

Enter SELRED with ATTENDANTS.

Support the king: whether a sudden faint
Or death be now upon him, trow I not,
But quickly call the queen.

Sel. Alas, my brother! (*assisting* Eth. *to raise* Ethw.'s *head.*)

Eth. Raise him gently, Selred.
For, if that life within him still remain,
It may revive him.

Sel. Ah! see how changed he is! Alas, my brother!
Pride of my father's house, is this thy end?

Enter ELBURGA, NOBLES, &c.

Elb. Let me approach unto my royal Lord.
Good Ethelbert, thou long hast known thy king,
Look'd he e'er thus before? (*looking on* Ethw.)

Eth. No, royal dame; and yet 'tis but a faint;
See, he revives again.

Ethw. (*opening his eyes.*) Who are about me now?

Eth. The queen and nobles.

Sel. And Selred, too, is here, my dearest Ethwald!

Ethw. (*holding out his hand to* Sel.)
Ay, noble brother, thou wert ever kind.
Faintness returns again; stand round, my friends,
And hear my dying words. It is my will
That Ethelbert shall, after my decease,
With the concurrence of the nation's council,
The kingdom settle as may best appear
To his experienced wisdom, and retain,
Until that settlement, the kingly power.
Faintness returns again; I say no more.
Art thou displeas'd, my Selred?

Sel. (*kneeling and kissing his hand.*)
No, brother, let your dying will bereave me
Ev'n of my father's lands, and with my sword
I will maintain it.

Ethw. Thou art a gen'rous brother; fare thee well!

Elb. What, is the queen, indeed, so poor a thing
In Mercia's state, that she o'er-passed is,
Unhonour'd and unmention'd?

Ethw. (*to* Elb. *waving his hand faintly.*)
Be at peace!
Thou shalt have all things that become thy state.
(*To* Attendants.) Lower my head, I pray you.

First Offi. He faints again.

Sec. Offi. He will not hold it long:
The kingdom will be torn with dire contentions,
And the Northumbrian soon will raise his head.

Ethw. (*raising himself eagerly with great vehemence.*)
Northumberland! Oh I did purpose soon,
With thrice five thousand of my chosen men,
To've compass'd his proud towers.
Death, death! thou art at hand, and all is ended!
(*groans and falls back upon the couch.*)

First Offi. This is a faint from which I fear, brave Thanes,
He will awake no more.

Sec. Offi. Say'st thou? Go nearer and observe the face.

First Offi. If that mine eyes did ever death behold,
This is a dead man's visage.

Sec. Offi. Let us retire. My good Lord Ethelbert,
You shall not find me backward in your service.

First Offi. Nor me.

Omnes. Nor any of us.

Eth. I thank you, Thanes! 'Tis fit you should retire;
But Selred and myself, and, of your number,
Two chosen by yourselves, will watch the body.
(*to* Dwina, *who supports* Elburga, *and seems soothing her.*)
Ay, gentle Dwina, soothe your royal mistress,
And lead her hence. (*after looking steadfastly on the body.*)
Think ye, indeed, that death hath dealt his blow?

First Offi. Ah, yes, my Lord! that countenance is death.

(Selred *kneels by the body, and hides his head.*)

Eth. Then peace be to his spirit!
A brave and daring soul is gone to rest.
Thus powerful death th' ambitious man arrests,
In midst of all his great and towering hopes.
With heart high swoln; as the omnipotent frost
Seizes the rough enchafed northern deep,
And all its mighty billows, heav'd aloft,
Boldly commixing with the clouds of heaven,
Are fix'd to rage no more.

(*The Curtain drops.*)

ETHWALD: A TRAGEDY.

PART SECOND.

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

MEN:

ETHWALD.
ETHELBERT.
SELRED.
EDWARD.
ALWY.
HEREULF.
HEXULF.
ONGAR.
THANES, SOLDIERS, &c. &c.

WOMEN:

ELBURGA.
DWINA.
LADIES, ATTENDANTS, &c. &c.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—A GLOOMY APARTMENT IN AN OLD SAXON CASTLE, WITH SMALL GRATED WINDOWS VERY HIGH FROM THE GROUND. EDWARD IS DISCOVERED SITTING BY A TABLE, AND TRACING FIGURES WITH CHALK UPON IT, WHICH HE FREQUENTLY RUBS OUT AGAIN; AT LAST, THROWING AWAY THE CHALK, HE FIXES HIS EYES UPON THE GROUND, AND CONTINUES FOR SOME TIME IN A MELANCHOLY POSTURE.

Enters to him the KEEPER, carrying something in his hand.

Edward. What brings thee now? it surely cannot be
The time of food: my prison hours are wont
To fly more heavily.
Keep. It is not food: I bring wherewith, my Lord,
To stop a rent in these old walls, that oft
Hath griev'd me, when I've thought of you o'nights;
Thro' it the cold wind visits you.
Ed. And let it enter! it shall not be stopp'd.
Who visits me besides the winds of heaven?
Who mourns with me but the sad sighing wind?
Who bringeth to mine ear the mimick'd tones
Of voices once belov'd and sounds long past
But the light-wing'd and many voiced wind?
Who fans the prisoner's lean and fever'd cheek
As kindly as the monarch's wreathed brows
But the free piteous wind?
I will not have it stopp'd.
Keep. My Lord, the winter now creeps on apace:
Hoar frost this morning, on our shelter'd fields
Lay thick, and glanced to the up-risen sun,
Which scarce had power to melt it.
Ed. Glanced to th' up-risen sun! Ay, such fair morns,
When ev'ry bush doth put its glory on,
Like to a gemmed bride! your rustics, now,
And early hinds, will set their clouted feet
Thro' silver webs, so bright and finely wrought
As royal dames ne'er fashion'd, yet plod on
Their careless way, unheeding.
Alas, how many glorious things there be
To look upon! Wear not the forests, now,
Their latest coat of richly varied dyes?
Keep. Yes, good my Lord, the cold chill year advances;
Therefore, I pray you, let me close that wall.
Ed. I tell thee no, man; if the north air bites,
Bring me a cloak.—Where is thy dog to-day?
Keep. Indeed, I wonder that he came not with me
As he is wont.
Ed. Bring him, I pray thee, when thou com'st again.
He wags his tail and looks up to my face
With the assured kindliness of one
Who has not injur'd me. How goes your sport?
Keep. Nobly, my Lord; and much it pleases me
To see your mind again so sooth'd and calm.
Ed. I thank thee: know'st thou not that man is form'd
For varied states; to top the throne of power,
Or in a toad's hole squat, shut from the light?
He can bear all things; yet, if thou hast grace,
Lead me for once into the open air,
To see the woods, and fields, and country round
In the fair light of heaven.
Keep. I must not do it; I am sworn to this;
But all indulgence, suited to this state
Of close confinement, gladly will I grant.
Ed. A faithful servant to a wicked lord,
Whoe'er he be, art thou. Is Oswal dead?
Or does some powerful Thane his power usurp? *(a pause.)*
Thou wilt not answer me. *(a horn heard without.)*

Keep. Ha! who is at the gate that sounds so boldly?
I'll mount this tower and see. (Exit *hastily, and* Edward *takes his seat again as before.*)
Keep. (*without, calling down from the Tower.*)
It is a company of armed men,
Bearing a royal ensign.
Ed. (*starting from his seat.*) Then let me rise and brace my spirits up!
They bring me death or freedom!

Re-enter Keeper from the Tower.

(*eagerly to him.*) What think'st thou of it?
Keep. I'll to the gate, and meet them instantly.
(*Exit, crossing over the stage hastily.*)
Ed. (*alone.*) An it be death, they'll do it speedily,
And there's the end of all. Ah, liberty!
An it be thou, enlarger of man's self!—
My heart doth strangely beat as tho' it were.
I hear their steps already: they come quickly:
Ah! how step they who joyful tidings bear!
Keep. (*calling without to* Edw. *before they enter*.
My Lord, my Lord! you're a free man again!
Ed. Am I? great God of heaven, how good thou art!

Enter two Thanes, conducted by the Keeper.

Ed. (*accosting them.*) Brave men, ye come upon a blessed errand,
And let me bless you.
First Th. With joy unto ourselves we bring, my Lord,
Your full enlargement from the highest power
That Mercia now obeys.
Ed. Not from King Oswal?
Sec. Th. No, most noble Ethling:
From the Lord Regent Ethelbert we come.
Ed. Mine uncle, then, is dead.
Sec. Th. E'en so, my Lord.
Ed. Ah! good and gentle, and to me most kind! (*weeps, hiding his face.*)
Died he peacefully?
First Th. He is at peace.
Ed. Ye are reserv'd with me.
But ye are wise, perhaps; time will declare it.
Give me your hands; ye are my loving friends.
And you, my good guardian of this castle, too,
You have not been to me a surly keeper.
(*taking the* Thanes *warmly by the hand, and afterwards the* Keeper.)
(*A second horn sounds without very loud.*)
First Th. Ha! at our heels another messenger
So quickly sent. Exit Keep.
Sec. Th. What may this mean?
Ed. Nay, wait not for him here.
Let us go forth from these inclosing walls,
And meet him in the light and open day.
First Th. 'Tis one, I hope, sent to confirm our errand:
How came he on so quickly?

Ed. Thou hopest, Thane? Oh! then thou doubtest too. (*pauses and looks earnestly in their faces.*)

Enter Ongar conducted by the Keeper.

First Th. (*to* Ongar.) Thine errand?
Ongar. That thou shalt know, and the authority
Which warrants it. You here are come, grave Thanes,
Upon the word of a scarce-named regent,
To set this pris'ner free; but I am come
With the sign'd will of Ethwald to forbid it;
And here I do retain him. (*laying hold of* Edw.)
First Th. Loose thy unhallowed grasp, thou base deceiver!
Nor face us out with a most wicked tale.
We left the king at his extremity,
And long ere this he must have breath'd his last.
Ongar. Art thou in a league with death to know so well
When he perforce must come to sick men's beds?
King Ethwald lives, and will live longer too
Than traitors wish for. Look upon these orders:
Knowest thou not his sign? (*shewing his warrant.*)
(*Both* Thanes *after reading it.*) 'Tis wonderful!
Ongar. Is it so wonderful
A wounded man, fainting with loss of blood
And rack'd with pain, should seem so near his end,
And yet recover?
Sec. Th. Ethwald then lives?
Ongar. Ay, and long live the king!
Ed. What words are these?
I am as one who, in a misty dream,
Listens to things wild and fantastical,
Which no congruity nor kindred bear
To preconceiv'd impressions.
King Ethwald, said ye? and is Ethwald king?
First Th. He did succeed your uncle.
Ed. And by his orders am I here detain'd?
First Th. Even so, my Lord.
Ed. It cannot be. (*turning to* Sec. Th.) Thou say'st not so, good Thane?
Sec. Th. I do believe it.
Ed. Nay, nay; ye are deceiv'd. (*turning to* Ongar.)
What says't thou?
Was I by Ethwald's orders here imprison'd?
Ongar. Yes, yes; who else had power or will to do it?
Ed. (*holding his clasp'd hands.*) Then hope, farewell!
My gleam is dark; my rest is in the dust!
O that an enemy had done this wrong!
But Ethwald, thou who to my heart wert press'd
As dearest brother never was by him
Who shar'd his mother's breast! Thou in whose fame
I gloried—I who spoke not of my own!—

When shouting crowds proclaim'd thy honour'd name,
I ever join'd with an ungrudging heart:
Yea, such true kindred feeling bore I to him,
E'en at his praise I wept. I pray you, sirs!
(*bursting into tears.*) this hath overcome me.

Ongar. (*to* Thanes.) Why do you tarry here? You've seen my warrant.
Depart with me, and leave the prisoner.

First Th. What, shall we leave him in this piteous state,
Lone and uncomforted?

Ongar. It must be so; there is no time to lose.
Come, follow me; my men are at the gate.

(*As they are all about to depart,* Edward, *starting furiously forward to the door, flies upon* Ongar, *and seizes him by the throat.*

Ed. What! leave me here, fiend! Am I not a man,
Created free to breathe the circling air
And range the boundless earth as thy base self,
Or thy more treach'rous lord? thou tyrant's slave!

(*As he struggles with him,* Ongar *calls loudly, and immediately the apartment is filled with armed men, who separate them.*)

Ongar. (*to his* Followers.) Remove that madman to the inner chamber.
Keeper, attend your duty. (*to the* Thanes.) Follow me.

[Exeunt Ongar *and* Thanes, &c.

Keep. (*to* Edw. *as some remaining armed men are leading him off by the opposite side.*)
Alas! alas! my Lord, to see you thus,
In closer bondage! Pray! good soldiers, pray!
Let him in this apartment still remain:
He'll be secure; I'll pledge my life——

Ed. No, no!
Let them enchain me in a pitchy gulph!
'Twere better than this den of weariness
Which my soul loathes. What care I now for ease?

[Exeunt Ed. *led off by the men.*

Scene II.—An apartment in the royal castle.

Enter Ethelbert meeting with Selred, who enters at the same time from a door at the bottom of the stage.

Eth. How did'st thou leave the king?

Sel. Recov'ring strength with ev'ry passing hour.
His spirits too, that were so weak and gloomy,
From frequent fainting and the loss of blood,
Now buoyant rise, and much assist the cure
Which all regard as wonderful.

Eth. It has deceiv'd us, yet I've heard of such.

Sel. Thou lookest sadly on it: how is this?
With little cost of thought I could explain
In any man but thee that cloudy brow;
But well I know thou didst not prize the power
With which thou wert invested.

Eth. Selred, this hasty gloom will prove too short
To work in Ethwald's mind the change we look'd for.
And yet he promis'd well.

Sel. Ay, and will well perform; mistrust him not.
I must confess, nature has form'd his mind
Too restless and aspiring; and of late,
Having such mighty objects in his grasp,
He has too reckless been of others' rights.
But, now that all is gain'd, mistrust him not:
He'll prove a noble king; a good one too.

Eth. Thou art his brother.

Sel. And thou his friend.

Eth. I stand reprov'd before thee.
A friend, indeed, should gentler thoughts maintain,
And so I will endeavour.

Sel. Give me thy valiant hand; full well I know
The heart which it pertains to.

Eth. I hear him, now, within his chamber stir.

Sel. Thou'lt move him best alone. God speed thy zeal!
I'll stand by thee the while and mark his eye.

(Eth. *remains on the front of the stage whilst* Ethwald *enters behind him from the door at the bottom of the stage, leaning upon an attendant.*

Ethw. (*to* Sel. *as he goes up to* Eth.)
How, Ethelbert, our friend, so deep in thought?
(*To the* Attendant.) Leave me awhile, methinks a brother's arm
Will be a kindlier staff. (Exit Attendant, *and he leans upon* Sel.)
How, Ethelbert, my friend!
What vision from the nether world of sprites
Now rises to thine eyes, thus on the ground
So fix'd and sternly bent?

Eth. Pardon, my Lord! my mind should now be turn'd
To cheerful thoughts, seeing you thus restor'd.
How fares it with you?

Ethw. E'en as with one, on a rude mountain's side,
Who suddenly in seeming gloom inclosed
Of drizly night, athwart the wearing mist
Sees the veil'd sun break forth in heaven's wide arch,
And shewing still a lengthen'd day before him.
As with a trav'ller in a gloomy path,
Whose close o'er-shaded end did scare his fancy
With forms of hidden ill; who, wending on
With fearful steps, before his eyes beholds
I' th sudden burst a fair and wide expanse
Of open country, rich in promis'd good.
As one o'erwhelmed in the battle's shock,
Who, all oppress'd and number'd with the slain,
Smother'd and lost, with sudden impulse strengthen'd,

Shakes the foul load of dead men from his back,
And finds himself again standing erect,
Unmaim'd and vigorous. As one who stood—
But it may tire thee, with such ample scope
To tell indeed how it doth fare with me.

Eth. You truly are from a dark gloom restor'd
To cheerful day; and, if the passing shade
Has well impress'd your mind, there lies before you
A prospect fair indeed. Ay, fairer far
Than that the gloom obscured.

Ethw. How sayest thou?

Eth. Did not that seeming cloud of death obscure
To your keen forecast eye tumultuous scenes
Of war and strife, and conquest yet to come,
Bought with your people's blood? but now, my Ethwald,
Your chasten'd mind, so rich in good resolves,
Hath stretch'd before it, future prospect fair,
Such as a God might please.

Ethw. How so, good Ethelbert?

Eth. And dost thou not perceive? O see before thee
Thy native land, freed from the ills of war
And hard oppressive power, a land of peace!
Where yellow fields unspoil'd, and pastures green,
Mottled with herds and flocks, who crop secure
Their native herbage, nor have ever known
A stranger's stall, smile gladly.
See, thro' its tufted alleys to heaven's roof
The curling smoke of quiet dwellings rise;
Whose humble masters, with forgotten spear
Hung on the webbed wall, and cheerful face
In harvest fields embrown'd, do gaily talk
Over their ev'ning meal, and bless king Ethwald,
The valiant yet the peaceful, whose wise rule,
Firm and rever'd, has brought them better days
Than e'er their fathers knew.

Ethw. A scene, indeed, fair and desirable;
But ah, how much confin'd! Were it not work,
A God befitting, with exerted strength,
By one great effort to enlarge its bounds,
And spread the blessing wide?

Eth. (*starting back from him.*)
Ha! there it is! that serpent bites thee still!
O spurn it, strangle it! let it rise no more!

Sel. (*laying his hand affectionately on* Ethwald's *breast.*)
My dearest brother, let not such wild thoughts
Again possess your mind!

Ethw. Go to! go to! (*to* Sel.) But, Ethelbert, thou'rt mad. (*turning angrily to* Eth.)

Eth. Not mad, my royal friend, but something griev'd
To see your restless mind still bent on that
Which will to you no real glory bring,
And to your hapless people many woes.

Ethw. Thou greatly errest from my meaning, friend.
As truly as thyself I do regard
My people's weal, and will employ the power
Heaven trusts me with, for that important end.
But were it not ignoble to confine
In narrow bounds the blessed power of blessing,
Lest, for a little space, the face of war
Should frown upon us? He who will not give
Some portion of his ease, his blood, his wealth,
For others' good, is a poor frozen churl.

Eth. Well, then again a simple warriour be,
And thine own ease, and blood, and treasure give:
But whilst thou art a king, and would'st bestow
On people not thine own the blessed gift
Of gentle rule, earn'd by the public force
Of thine own subjects, thou dost give away
That o'er the which thou hast no right.
Frown not:
I will assert it, crown'd and royal Lord,
Tho' to your ears full rude the sound may be.

Ethw. Chaf'd Thane, be more restrain'd.
Thou knowest well,
That, as a warlike chieftain, never yet
The meanest of my soldiers grasp'd his spear
To follow me constrain'd; and as a King,
Think'st thou I'll be less noble?

Sel. Indeed, good Ethelbert, thou art too warm;
Thou dealest hardly with him.

Eth. I know, tho' peace dilates the heart of man,
And makes his stores increase; his count'nance smile,
He is by nature form'd, like savage beasts,
To take delight in war.
'Tis a strong passion in his bosom lodged,
For ends most wise, curb'd and restrain'd to be;
And they who for their own designs do take
Advantage of his nature, act, in truth,
Like cruel hinds who spirit the poor cock
To rend and tear his fellow.
O thou! whom I so often in my arms,
A bold and gen'rous boy have fondly press'd,
And now do proudly call my sov'reign lord,
Be not a cruel master! O be gentle!
Spare Mercian blood! Goodness and power do make
Most meet companions. The great Lord of all,
Before whose awful presence, short-while since,
Thou did'st expect to stand, almighty is,
Also most merciful:
And the bless'd Being he to earth did send
To teach our soften'd hearts to call him Father,
Most meekly did confide his heavenly power
Unto the task assign'd him. Think of this.
O! dost thou listen to me?

Ethw. (*moved and softened.*)
Yes, good Ethelbert.
Be thou more calm: we will consider of it.
We should desire our people's good, and peace
Makes them to flourish. We confess all this;

But circumstance oft takes away the power
Of acting on it. Still our Western neighbours
Are turbulent and bold; and, for the time,
Tho' somewhat humbled, they again may rise
And force us to the field.

Sel. No, fear it not! they are inclin'd to peace,
Tidings I've learnt, sent by a trusty messenger,
Who from Caernarvon is with wond'rous speed
But just arriv'd: their valiant prince is dead.
A sudden death has snatch'd him in his prime
And a weak infant, under tutorage
Of three contending chiefs of little weight,
Now rules the state, whom, thou may'st well perceive,
Can give thee no disturbance.

Ethw. (*eagerly, with his eyes lightening up, and his whole frame agitated.*)
A trusty messenger has told thee this?
O send him to me quickly! still fair fortune
Offers her favours freely. Send him quickly!
Ere yet aware of my returning health,
Five thousand men might without risk be led
E'en to their castle walls.

Eth. What, mean'st thou this?
Uprous'd again unto this dev'lish pitch?
Oh, it is horrid!

Ethw. (*in great heat.*) Be restrained, Thane.

Eth. Be thou restrained, king. See how thou art,
Thus feebly tott'ring on those wasted limbs!
And would'st thou spoil the weak? (*observing* Ethw. *who staggers from being agitated beyond his strength.*)

Ethw. (*pushing away* Selred *who supports him.*)
I do not want thine aid: I'm well and vig'rous:
My heart beats strongly, and my blood is warm;
Tho' there are those who spy my weakness out
To shackle me withal. Ho, thou without!

Enter his ATTENDANT, and ETHW. taking hold of him walks across the stage; then turning about to SEL. and ETH.

Brother, send quickly for your trusty messenger;
And so good day. Good morning, Thane of Sexford. (*looking sternly to* Ethelbert.)

Eth. Good morning, Mercia's king.

[EXEUNT *by opposite sides, frowningly.*

SCENE III.—A GRAND APARTMENT WITH A CHAIR OF STATE.

Enter HEXULF and ALWY, engaged in close conversation.

Alwy. (*continuing to speak.*) Distrust it not;
The very honours and high exaltation
Of Ethelbert, that did your zealous ire
So much provoke, are now the very tools
With which we'll work his ruin.

Hex. But still proceed with caution; gain the queen;
For she, from ev'ry hue of circumstance,
Must be his enemy.

Alwy. I have done that already.
By counterfeiting Ethwald's signature
Whilst in that still and deathlike state he lay,
To hinder Ethelbert's rash treach'rous haste
From setting Edward free, I have done that
For which, tho' Ethwald thanks me, I must needs
On bended knee, for courtly pardon sue.
The queen I have address'd with humble suit
My cause to plead with her great Lord, and she
Her most magnificent and high protection
Be of our party, e'en if on her mind
No other motive press'd.

Hex. I doubt it not, and yet I fear her spirit,
Proud and aspiring, will desire to rule
More than befits our purpose.

Alwy. Fear it not.
It is the shew and worship of high state
That she delights in more than real power:
She has more joy in stretching forth her hand
And saying, "I command," than, in good truth,
Seeing her will obey'd.

Enter QUEEN with DWINA and ATTENDANTS.

Hex. Saint Alban bless you, high and royal dame!
We are not here, in an intruding spirit,
Before your royal presence.

Qu. I thank you, good lord bishop, with your friend,
And nothing doubt of your respect and duty.

Alwy. Thanks, gracious queen! This good and holy man
Thus far supports me in your royal favour,
Which is the only rock that I would cling to,
Willing to give me friendly countenance.

Qu. You have done well, good Alwy, and have need
Of thanks more than of pardon; nevertheless,
If any trouble light on thee for this,
A royal hand shall be stretch'd forth to save you,
Whom none in Mercia, whosoe'er they be,
Will venture to oppose. I will protect thee,
And have already much inclin'd the king
To favour thee.

Alwy. (*kneeling and kissing her hand.*)
Receive my humble thanks, most honour'd queen!
My conscience tells me I have merited,
Of you and of the king, no stern rebuke;
But that dark cunning Thane has many wiles
To warp men's minds e'en from their proper good.
He has attempted, or report speaks falsely,
To lure king Ethwald to resign his crown.
What may he not attempt! it makes me shrink!
He trusts his treasons to no mortal men:
'iends meet him in his hall at dead of night,
And are his counsellors.

Queen. (*holding up her hands.*)

Protect us, heaven!

Hex. Saint Alban will protect you, gracious queen.
Trust me, his love for pious Oswal's daughter
Will guard you in the hour of danger. Hark?
The king approaches. (*flourish of trumpets.*)

Qu. Yes, at this hour he will receive in state
The bold address of those seditious Thanes,
Clam'ring for peace, when fair occasion smiles,
And beckons him to arm and follow her.

Hex. We know it well; of whom Thane Ethelbert,
In secret is the chief, although young Hereulf
By him is tutor'd in the spokesman's office.

Enter ETHWALD, attended by many THANES, and Officers of the Court, &c.

Qu. (*presenting* Alwy *to* Ethw.) My Lord, a humble culprit at your feet,
Supported by my favour, craves forgiveness.
(Alwy *kneels, and* Ethw. *raises him graciously.*)

Ethw. I grant his suit, supported by the favour
Of that warm sense I wear within my breast
Of his well meaning zeal. (*looking contemptuously at the* Queen, *who turns haughtily away.*)
But wherefore, Alwy,
Didst thou not boldly come to me at first
And tell thy fault? Might not thy former services
Out-balance well a greater crime than this?

Alwy. I so, indeed, had done, but a shrewd Thane,
Of mind revengeful and most penetrating,
Teaches us caution in whate'er regards
His dealings with the state. I fear the man.

Ethw. And wherefore dost thou fear him?

Alwy. (*mysteriously.*) He has a cloudy brow, a stubborn gait;
His dark soul is shut up from mortal man,
And deeply broods upon its own conceits
Of right and wrong.

Hex. He has a soul black with foul atheism
And heresies abominable. Nay,
He has a tongue of such persuasive art
That all men listen to him.

Qu. (*eagerly.*) More than men:
Dark spirits meet him at the midnight hour,
And horrid converse hold.

Ethw. No more, I pray you! Ethelbert I know.

Qu. Indeed, indeed, my Lord, you know him not!

Ethw. Be silent, wife. (*turning to* Hex. *and* Al.)
My tried and faithful Alwy,
And pious Hexulf, in my private closet
We further will discourse on things of moment,
At more convenient time.
The leagued Thanes advance. Retire, Elburga:
Thou hast my leave. I gave thee no command
To join thy presence to this stern solemnity.
Soft female grace adorns the festive hall,
And sheds a brighter lustre on high days
Of pageant state; but in an hour like this,
Destin'd for gravest audience, 'tis unmeet.

Qu. What, is the queen an empty bauble, then,
To gild thy state withal?

Ethw. The queens of Mercia, first of Mercian dames,
Still fair example give of meek obedience
To their good Lords. This is their privilege.
(*seeing that she delays to go.*)
It is my will. A good day to your highness.

Qu. (*aside as she goes off.*) Be silent, wife!
This Mollo's son doth say
Unto the royal offspring of a king. (EXIT Queen, *frowning angrily, and followed by* Dwina *and* Attendants.)

(*The* Thanes, *who entered with* Ethwald, *and during his conversation with* Alwy, &c. *had retired to the bottom of the stage, now come forward.*)

Ethw. Now wait we for those grave and sluggish chiefs,
Who would this kingdom, fam'd for warlike Thanes,
Change into mere provision-land to feed
A dull unwarlike race.

Alwy. Ay, and our castles,
Whose lofty walls are darken'd with the spoils
Of glorious war, to barns and pinning folds,
Where our brave hands, instead of sword and spear,
The pruning knife and shepherd's staff must grasp.

Hex. True; sinking you, in such base toils unskill'd,
Beneath the wiser carl. This is their wish,
But heaven and our good saint will bring to nought
Their wicked machinations.

ENTER an Officer of the Castle.

Off. Th' assembled Thanes, my Lord, attend without.

Ethw. Well, let them enter. [EXIT *Off.*
Our stool beneath us will not shake, I trust,
Being so fenced round. (*taking his seat and bowing courteously with a smiling countenance to the* Chiefs, *&c. who range themselves near him.*)

Enter several THANES with HEREULF at their head, and presently after followed by ETHELBERT.

Her. (*stretching out his hand with respectful dignity.*) Our king and sire, in true and humble duty
We come before you, earnestly entreating
Your royal ear to our united voice.

Ethw. Mine ear is ever open to the voice
Of faithful duty.

Her. We are all men who, in th' embattled field,

Have by your side the front of danger brav-ed,
With greater lack of prudence than of dar-ing;
And have opposed our rough and scarred breasts
To the fell push of war, with liberality
Not yielding to the bravest of your Thanes,
The sons of warlike sires. But we are men
Who, in our cheerful halls, have also been
Lords of the daily feast; where, round our boards,
The hoary headed warriour, from the toil
Of arms releas'd, with the cheer'd stranger smiled:
Who in the humble dwellings of our hinds,
Have seen a numerous and hardy race,
Eating the bread of labour cheerfully,
Dealt to them with no hard nor churlish hand.
We, therefore, stand with graceful boldness forth,
The advocates of those who wish for peace.
Worn with our rude and long continued wars,
Our native land wears now the altered face
Of an uncultur'd wild. To her fair fields,
With weeds and thriftless docks now shag-ged o'er,
The aged grandsire, bent and past his toil,
Who in the sunny nook had plac'd his seat
And thought to toil no more, leads joyless forth
His widow'd daughters and their orphan train,
The master of a silent, cheerless band.
The half-grown stripling, urged before his time
To manhood's labour, steps, with feeble limbs
And sallow cheek, around his unroof'd cot.
The mother on her last remaining son
With fearful bodings looks. The cheerful sound
Of whistling ploughmen, and the reaper's song,
And the flail's lusty stroke is heard no more.
The youth and manhood of our land are laid
In the cold earth, and shall we think of war?
O valiant Ethwald! listen to the calls
Of gentle pity, in the brave most graceful,
Nor, for the lust of more extended sway,
Shed the last blood of Mercia. War is hon-ourable
In those who do their native rights maintain;
In those whose swords an iron barrier are
Between the lawless spoiler and the weak:
But is in those who draw th' offensive blade
For added power or gain, sordid and despica-ble
As meanest office of the worldly churl.

Ethw. Chiefs and assembled Thanes, I much commend
The love you bear unto your native land.
Shame to the son nurs'd on her gen'rous breast
Who loves her not! and be assur'd that I,
Her reared child, her soldier and her king,
In true and warm affection yield to none
Of all who have upon her turfy lap
Thus infant gambol held. To you her weal
Is gain and pleasure; glory 'tis to me.
To you her misery is loss and sorrow;
To me disgrace and shame. Of this be sat-isfied;
I feel her sacred claims, which these high ensigns
Have fastened on me, and I will fulfil them:
But for the course and manner of perform-ance,
Be that unto the royal wisdom left,
Strengthen'd by those appointed by the state
To aid and counsel it. Ye have our leave,
With all respect and favour to retire.

Her. We will retire, king Ethwald, as be-comes
Free, independent Thanes, who do of right
Approach or quit at will the royal presence,
And lacking no permission.

Alwy. What, all so valiant in this princely hall,
Ye who would shrink from the fair field of war,
Where soldiers should be bold?

Her. (*laying his hand on his sword.*)
Thou ly'st, mean boastful hireling of thy Lord,
And shalt be punish'd for it.

First Th. (*of* Ethwald's *side.*)
And dar'st thou threaten, mouth of bold sedi-tion?
We will maintain his words. (*Draws his sword, and all the* Thanes *on the* King's *side do the same.* Hereulf *and the* Thanes *of his side also draw their swords.*)

First Th. (*of* Hereulf's *side.*)
Come on, base trockers of your country's blood.

First Th. (*of* Ethwald's *side.*)
Have at ye, rebel cowards!

Ethw. (*rising from his seat, and standing between the two parties in a command-ing posture.*)
I do command you: peace and silence, chiefs!
He who with word or threat'ning gesture dares
The presence of his king again outrage,
I put without the covert of the law,
And on the instant punish. (*they all put up their swords, and* Ethwald, *after look-ing round him for some moments with commanding sternness, walks off majestically, followed by his* Thanes.)

Ethelbert. (*casting up his eyes to heaven as he turns to follow* Hereulf *and his party.*)
Ah, Mercia, Mercia! on red fields of carnage
Bleed thy remaining sons, and carrion birds
Tear the cold limbs that should have turn'd thy soil. [Exeunt *the two different parties by opposite sides.*

ACT II.

SCENE I. A SMALL CAVERN IN WHICH IS DISCOVERED A WIZARD, SITTING BY A FIRE OF EMBERS, BAKING HIS SCANTY MEAL OF PARCHED CORN, AND COUNTING OUT SOME MONEY, FROM A BAG; A BOOK AND OTHER THINGS BELONGING TO HIS ART ARE STREWED NEAR HIM ON THE GROUND.

Wiz. (*alone.*) Thanks to the restless soul of Mollo's son!
Well thrives my trade. Here, the last hoarded coin
Of the spare widow, trembling for the fate
Of her remaining son, and the gay jewel
Of fearful maid, who steals by fall of eve,
With muffled face, to learn her warriour's doom,
Lie in strange fellowship; so doth misfortune
Make strange acquaintance meet.

ENTER a Scout.

Brother, thou com'st in haste; what news, I pray?
Scout. Put up thy book, and bag, and wizard's wand,
This is no time for witchery and wiles,
Thy cave, I trow, will soon be filled with those,
Who are by present ills too roughly shent
To look thro' vision'd spells on those to come.
Wiz. What thou would'st tell me, tell in plainer words.
Scout. Well, plainly then, Ethwald, who thought full surely
The British in their weak divided state,
To the first onset of his arms would yield
Their ill defended towers, has found them strength'ned
With aid from Wessex, and unwillingly
Led back with cautious skill the Mercian troops;
Meaning to tempt the foe, as it is thought,
To follow him into our open plains,
Where they must needs with least advantage fight.
Wiz. Who told thee this?
Scout. Mine eyes have seen them. Scarcely three miles off,
The armies, at this moment, are engaged
In bloody battle. On my way I met
A crowd of helpless women, from their homes
Who fly with terror, each upon her back
Bearing some helpless babe or valued piece
Of household goods, snatch'd up in haste. I hear
Their crowding steps e'en now within your cave:
They follow close behind.

(Enter a crowd of WOMEN, young and old, some leading children and carrying infants on their backs or in their arms, others carrying bundles and pieces of household stuff.)

Wiz. Who are ye, wretched women,
Who, all so pale and haggard bear along
Those hapless infants, and those seeming wrecks,
From desolation saved? What do you want?
First Wom. Nought but the friendly shelter of your cave,
For now our house, or home, or blazing hearth,
Good Wizard, we have none.
Wiz. And are the armies then so near your dwellings?
First Wom. Ay, round them, in them the loud battle clangs.
Within our very walls fierce spearman push,
And weapon'd warriors cross their clashing blades.
Sec. Wom. Ah woe is me! our warm and cheerful hearths,
And rushed floors whereon our children play'd,
Are now the bloody lair of dying men.
Old Wom. Ah woe is me! those yellow thatch'd roofs,
Which I have seen these sixty years and ten,
Smoking so sweetly 'midst our tufted thorns,
And the turf'd graves wherein our fathers sleep!
Young Wom. Ah woe is me! my little helpless babes!
Now must some mossy rock or shading tree
Be your cold home and the wild haws your food.
No cheerful blazing fire and seething pot
Shall now, returning from his daily toil,
Your father cheer! if that, if that indeed
Ye have a father still. (*bursting into tears.*)
Third Wom. Alack, alack! of all my goodly stuff
I've saved but only this! my winter's webs
And all the stores that I so dearly saved!
I thought to have them to my dying day!

Enter a YOUNG MAN leading in an IDIOT.

Young Wom. (*running up to him.*)
Ah, my dear Swithick! art thou safe indeed?
Why didst thou leave me?
Young Man. To save our idiot brother, see'st thou here?
I could not leave him in that pityless broil.
Young Wom. Well hast thou done! poor helpless Balderkin!
We've fed thee long, unweeting of our care,
And in our little dwelling still thou'st held
The warmest nook; and, wheresoe'er we be,
So shalt thou still, albeit thou know'st it not.

Enter MAN carrying an OLD MAN on his back.

Young Man. And see here, too, our neighbour Edwin comes,
Bearing his bed-rid father on his back.
Come in, good man. How dost thou, aged neighbour?
Cheer up again! thou shalt be shelter'd still;
The wizard has receiv'd us.
Wiz. True, good folks;
I wish my means were better for your sakes.
But we are crowded here; that winding passage

Leads us into an inner cave full wide,
Where we may take our room and freely breathe;
Come let us enter there.

[Exeunt, *all following the* Wizard *into the inner cave.*

Scene II. A FIELD OF BATTLE STREWED WITH SLAIN, AND SOME PEOPLE SEEN UPON THE BACK GROUND SEARCHING AMONGST THE DEAD BODIES.

Enter Hereulf and Ethelbert.

Her. (*stopping short and holding up his hands.*)
Good mercy! see what a bloody price
Ethwald this doubtful victory has purchased,
That in the lofty height to which he climbs
A little step will be of small advantage.

Eth. (*not attending to him, and after gazing for some time on the field.*)
So thus ye lie, who, with the morning sun,
Rose cheerily and girt your armour on
With all the vigour, and capacity,
And comeliness of strong and youthful men.
Ye also, taken in your manhood's wane,
With grizzled pates, from mates, whose withered hands
For some good thirty years had smooth'd your couch:
Alas! and ye whose fair and early growth
Did give you the similitude of men
Ere your fond mothers ceas'd to tend you still,
As nurselings of their care, ye lie together!
Alas! alas! and many now there be,
Smiling and crowing on their mother's breast,
Twining with all their little infant ways,
Around her hopeful heart, who shall, like these,
Be laid i' the dust.

Her. Ay, so it needs must be, since Mollo's son
Thinks Mercia all too strait for his proud sway.
But here comes those who search amongst the dead
For their lost friends; retire, and let us mark them. (*they withdraw to one side.*)

Enter Two Cairls, meeting a Third, who enters by the opposite side.

First Cairl. (*to* Third.) Thou hast been o'er the field?

Third Cairl. I have, good friend.

Sec. Cairl. Thou hast seen a rueful sight.

Third Cairl. Yes, I have seen that which no other sight
Can from my fancy wear. Oh! there be some
Whose writhed features, fix'd in all the strength
Of grappling agony, do stare upon you,
With their dead eyes half open'd.——
And there be some, stuck thro' with bristling darts,
Whose clench'd hands have torn the pebbles up;
Whose gnashing teeth have ground the very sand.
Nay, some I've seen among those bloody heaps,
Defaced and 'reft e'en of the form of men,
Who in convulsive motion yet retain
Some shreds of life more horrible than death:
I've heard their groans, oh, oh!
(*A voice from the ground.*) Baldwick!

Third Cairl. What voice is that? it comes from some one near.

First Cairl. See, yon stretch'd body moves its bloody hand:
It must be him.
(*Voice again.*) Baldwick!

Third Cairl. (*going up to the body from whence the voice came.*)
Who art thou, wretched man? I know thee not.

Voice. Ah, but thou dost! I have sat by thy fire,
And heard thy merry tales, and shar'd thy meal.

Third Cairl. Good holy saints! and art thou Athelbald?
Woe! woe is me to see thee in such case!
What shall I do for thee?

Voice. If thou hast any love or mercy in thee,
Turn me upon my face that I may die;
For lying thus, see'st thou this flooded gash?
The glutting blood so bolsters up my life
I cannot die.

Third Cairl. I will, good Athelbald. Alack the day!
That I should do for thee so sad a service!
(*turns the soldier on his face.*)

Voice. I thank thee, friend, farewell! (*dies.*)

Third Cairl. Farewell! farewell! a merry soul thou wert,
And sweet thy ploughman's whistle in our fields.

Sec. Cair. (*starting with horrour.*) Good heaven forefend! it moves!

First Cairl. What dost thou see?

Sec. Cairl. Look on that bloody corse, so smear'd and mangled.
That it has lost all form of what it was;
It moves! it moves! there is life in it still.

First Cairl. Methought it spoke, but faint and low the sound.

Third Cairl. Ha! didst thou hear a voice? we'll go to it.
Who art thou? Oh! who art thou? (*to a fallen warriour, who makes signs to him to pull something from his breast.*)
Yes, from thy breast; I understand the sign.
(*pulling out a band or 'kerchief from his breast.*)
It is some maiden's pledge.

Fallen Warriour. (*making signs.*) Upon mine arm,
I pray thee, on mine arm.

Third Cairl I'll do it, but thy wounds are past all binding.

Warriour. She who will search for me doth know this sign.

Third Cairl. Alack, alack: he thinks of some sad maid!
A rueful sight she'll see! He moves again:
Heaven grant him peace! I'd give a goodly sum
To see thee dead, poor wretch!

Enter a WOMAN wailing and wringing her hands.

Sec. Cairl. Ha! who comes wailing here?
Third Cairl. Some wretched mother who has lost her son:
I met her searching 'midst the farther dead,
And heard her piteous moan.
Mother. I rear'd him like a little playful kid,
And ever by my side, where'er I went,
He blithely trotted. And full soon, I ween,
His little arms did strain their growing strength
To bear my burden. Ay, and long before
He had unto a stripling's height attain'd,
He ever would my widow's cause maintain
With all the steady boldness of a man.
I was no widow then.
Sec. Cairl. Be comforted, good mother.
Mother. What say'st thou to me? know'st thou where he lies?
If thou hast kindness in thee, tell me truly;
For dead or living still he is mine all,
And let me have him.
Third Cairl. (*aside to* Second.) Lead her away, good friend; I know her now.
Her boy is lying with the farther dead,
Like a fell'd sapling; lead her from the field.
[EXEUNT Mother *and* Sec. Cairl.
First Cairl. But who comes now, with such distracted gait,
Tossing her snowy arms unto the wind,
And gazing wildly o'er each mangled corse?

Enter a YOUNG WOMAN, searching distractedly amongst the dead.

Young Wom. No, no! thou art not here! thou art not here!
Yet, if thou be like these, I shall not know thee.
Oh! if they have so gash'd thee o'er with wounds,
And marr'd thy comely form! I'll not believe it.
Until these very eyes have seen thee dead,
These very hands have press'd on thy cold heart,
I'll not believe it.
Third Cairl. Ah, gentle maiden! many a maiden's love,
And many a goodly man lies on this field.
Young Wom. I know, too true it is, but none like him.
Liest thou, indeed, amongst those grisly heaps?
O thou, who ever wert of all most fair!
If heaven hath suffer'd this, amen, amen!
Whilst I have strength to crawl upon the earth,
I'll search thee out, and be, where'er thou art,
Thy mated love, e'en with the grisly dead.
(*Searching again among the dead, she perceives the band round the arm of the fallen* Warriour, *and uttering a loud shriek falls senseless upon the ground. The* Cairls *run to her assistance, with* Ethelbert *and* Hereulf, *who come forward from the place they had withdrawn to;* Hereulf *clenching his hand and muttering curses upon* Mollo's *son, as he crosses the stage. The scene closes.*)

SCENE III. A CASTLE NOT FAR FROM THE FIELD OF BATTLE.

Enter ETHWALD and ALWY, talking as they enter.

Ethw. (*calling angrily to some one off the stage.*)
And see they do not linger on the road,
With laggard steps; I will brook no delay.
(*to Alwy.*) Why, even my very messengers, of late,
Slothful and sleepy footed have become:
They too must cross my will. (*throws himself upon a seat, and sits for some time silent and gloomy.*)
Alwy. Your highness seems disturb'd.
What tho' your arms, amidst those British hills,
Have not, as they were wont, victorious prov'd,
And home retreating, even on your own soil,
You've fought a doubtful battle: luckless turns
Will often cross the lot of greatest kings:
Let it not so o'ercome your noble spirit.
Ethw. Thinkest thou it o'ercomes me?
(*rising up proudly.*)
Thou judgest poorly. I am form'd to yield
To no opposed pressure, nor my purpose
With crossing chance or circumstance to change.
I, in my march to this attained height,
Have moved still with an advancing step
Direct and onward.
But now the mountain's side more rugged grows,
And he, who would the cloudy summit gain,
Must oft into its cragged rents descend,
The higher but to mount.
Alwy. Or rather say, my Lord, that having gain'd
Its cloudy summit, there you must contend
With the rude tempests that do beat upon it.
Ethw. (*smiling contemptuously.*)
Is this thy fancy? are thy thoughts of Ethwald
So poorly limited, that thou dost think
He has already gain'd his grandeur's height?
Know that the lofty point which oft appears,
To him who stands beneath the mountain's top,
Is, to the daring climber who hath reach'd it,
Only a breathing place, from whence he sees
Its real summit, bright and heaven illum'd,
Towering majestic, grand, above him far
As is the lofty spot on which he stands
To the dull plain below.
The British once subdued, Northumberland,
Thou seest well, could not withstand our arms.

It too must fall; and with such added strength,
What might not be achiev'd? Ay, by this arm!
All that the mind suggests, even England's crown,
United and entire. Thou gazest on me.
I know full well the state is much exhausted
Of men and means: and those cursed Mercian women
To cross my purposes, with hag-like spite,
Do nought but females bear. But I will onward.
Still conscious of its lofty destination,
My spirit swells, and will not be subdued.

Alwy. I, chidden, bow, and yield with admiration
Unto the noble grandeur of your thoughts.
But lowering clouds arise; events are adverse;
Subdue your secret enemies at home,
And reign securely o'er the ample realm
You have so bravely won.

Ethw. What! have I thro' the iron fields of war
Proudly before th' admiring gaze of men,
Unto this point with giant steps held on,
Now to become a dwarf? Have I this crown
In bloody battles won, mocking at death,
To wear it now as those to whom it comes
By dull and leaden-paced inheritance?
As the dead shepherd's scrip and knotted crook
Go to his milk-fed son? Like those dull images,
On whose calm, tamed brows the faint impression
Of far preceding heroes faintly rests,
As the weak colours of a fading rainbow
On a spent cloud?
I'd rather in the centre of the earth
Inclosed be, to dig my upward way
To the far distant light, than stay me thus,
And, looking round upon my bounded state,
Say, this is all. No; lower it as it may,
I'll to the bold aspirings of my mind
Still steady prove, whilst that around my standard
Harness doth clatter, or a falchion gleam.

Alwy. What boot the bold aspirings of the great,
When secret foes beneath his footsteps work
Their treach'rous mine?

Ethw. Ay, thou before hast hinted of such foes.

Alwy. Fear for your safety, king, may make me err:
But these combined chiefs, it is full plain,
Under the mask of zeal for public good,
Do court with many wiles your people's hearts;
Breathing into their ears the praise of peace,
Yea, and of peaceful kings. The thralled Edward,
Whose prison-tower stands distant from this castle
But scarce a league——

Ethw. (*starting.*) Is it so near us?

Alwy. It is, my Lord.
Nor is he so forgotten in the land,
But that he still serves their dark purpose well.
An easy gentle prince—so brave, yet peaceful—
With such impressions clogg'd, your soldiers fight,
And therefore 'tis that with a feeble foe
Ethwald fights doubtful battles.

Ethw. Thou art convinc'd of this?

Alwy. Most perfectly.

Ethw. I too have had such thoughts, and have repress'd them.

Alwy. Did not those base petitioners for peace
Withhold their gather'd forces, till beset
On ev'ry side they saw your little army,
Already much diminish'd? then came they,
Like heaven commission'd saviours, to your aid,
And drew unto themselves the praise of all.
This plainly speaks, your glory with disgrace
They fain would dash to set their idol up;
For well they think, beneath the gentle Edward
To lord it proudly, and his gen'rous nature
Has won their love and pity. Ethelbert,
Now that such fair occasion offers to them,
The prisoner's escape may well effect:
He lacks not means.

Ethw. (*after a thoughtful pause.*)
Didst thou not say, that castle's foggy air,
And walls with dampness coated, to young blood
Are hostile and creative of disease?
In close confinement he has been full long;
Is there no change upon him?

Alwy. Some hardy natures will resist all change.

(*A long pause, in which* Ethwald *seems thoughtful and disturbed.*).

Ethw. (*abruptly.*)
Once in the roving fantasies of night
Methought I slew him.

Alwy. Dreams, as some think, oft shew us things to come.

(*Another long pause, in which* Ethwald *seems greatly disturbed, and stands fixed to one spot, till catching* Alwy's *eye fastened stedfastly upon his, he turns from him abruptly, and walks to the bottom of the stage with hasty strides. Going afterwards to the door, he turns suddenly round to* Alwy *just as he is about to go out.*)

Ethw. What Thane was he, who, in a cavern'd vault,
His next of kin so long imprison'd kept,
Whilst on his lands he lived?

Alwy. Yes, Ruthal's Thane he was; but dearly he
The dark contrivance rued; fortune at last
The weary thrall reliev'd, and ruin'd him.

Ethw. (*agitated.*) Go where thy duty calls thee: I will in:
My head feels strangely; I have need of rest.
[Exit.

Alwy. (*looking after him with a malicious satisfaction.*)

Ay, dark perturbed thoughts will be thy rest.
I see the busy workings of thy mind.
The gentle Edward has not long to mourn
His earthly thraldom. I have done my task,
And soon shall be secure; for whilst he lives,
And Ethelbert, who hates my artful rise,
I live in jeopardy. [Exit.

Scene IV.—A small dark passage.

Enter Ethwald with a lamp in his hand; enter at the same time, by the opposite side, a domestic Officer: they both start back on seeing one another.

Ethw. Who art thou?

Offi. Baldwin, my Lord. But mercy on my sight!
Your face is strangely alter'd. At this hour
Awake, and wand'ring thus.—Have you seen aught?

Ethw. No, nothing. Knows't thou which is Alwy's chamber?
I would not wake my grooms.

Offi. It is that farther door; I'll lead you to it. (*pointing off the stage.*)

Ethw. No, friend, I'll go myself. Good rest to thee. [Exeunt.

Scene V.—A small dark chamber, with a low couch near the front of the stage, on which Alwy is discovered asleep.

Enter Ethwald with a haggard countenance, bearing a lamp.

Ethw. He sleeps—I hear him breathe—he soundly sleeps.
Seems not this circumstance to check my purpose,
And bid me still to pause? (*setting down the lamp.*)
But wherefore pause?
This deed must be, for, like a scared thief
Who starts and trembles o'er his grasped store
At ev'ry breezy whisper of the night,
I now must wear this crown, which I have bought
With brave men's blood, in fields of battle shed.
Ah! would that all it cost had there been shed!
This deed must be; for, like a haggard ghost
His image haunts me wheresoe'er I move,
And will not let me rest.
His love hath been to me my bosom's sting;
His gen'rous trust hath gnaw'd me like a worm.
Oh! would a sweltring snake had wreath'd my neck
When first his arms embrac'd me!
He is by fortune made my bane, my curse,
And, were he gentle as the breast of love,
I needs must crush him.
Prison'd or free, where'er he breathes, lives one
Whom Ethwald fears. Alas! this thing must be,
From th' imaged form of which I still have shrunk,
And started back as from my fancy's fiend.
The dark and silent cope of night is o'er us,
When vision'd horrours, thro' perturbed sleep,
Harden to deeds of blood the dreamer's breast;
When from the nether world fell demons rise
To guide with lurid flames the murd'rer's way:
I'll wake him now; should morning dawn upon me.
My soul again might from its purpose swerve.
(*in a loud energetic voice.*)
Alwy, awake! Sleepest thou? sleepest thou, Alwy?
(Alwy *wakes.*) Nay, rouse thyself, and be thou fully waking.
What I would say must have thy mind's full bent;
Must not be spoken to a drowsy ear.

Alwy. (*rising quickly.*) I fully am awake; I hear, I see,
As in the noon of day.

Ethw. Nay, but thou dost not.
Thy garish eye looks wildly on the light,
Like a strange visitor.

Alwy. So do the eyes of one pent in the dark,
When sudden light breaks on them, tho' he slept not.
But why, my Lord, at this untimely hour
Are you awake, and come to seek me here?

Ethw. Alwy, I cannot sleep: my mind is toss'd
With many warring thoughts. I am push'd on
To do the very act from which my soul
Has still held back: fate doth compel me to it.

Alwy. Being your fate, who may its power resist?

Ethw. E'en call it so, for it, in truth, must be.
Know'st thou one who would do a ruthless deed,
And do it pitifully?

Alwy. He who will do it surest does it best;
And he who surely strikes, strikes quickly too,
And therefore pitifully strikes. I know
A brawny ruffian, whose firm clenched gripe
No struggles can unlock; whose lifted dagger,
True to its aim, gives not a second stroke!

Ethw. (*covering his face hastily.*) Oh must it needs be so?
(*catching* Alwy *eagerly by the arm.*) But hark thee well;
I will have no foul butchery done upon him.

Alwy. It shall be done, e'en to the smallest tittle,
As you yourself shall order.

Ethw. Nay, nay! do thou contrive the fashion of it,
I've done enough.

Alwy. But good, my Lord! cast it not from you thus:

There must be warrant and authority
For such a deed, and strong protection too.

Ethw. Well, well, thou hast it all; thou hast my word.

Alwy. Ay, but the murder'd corse must be inspected,
That no deceit be fear'd, nor after doubts;
Nor bold impostors rising in the North,
Protected by your treach'rous Thanes, and plum'd,
To scare you afterwards with Edward's name.

Ethw. Have not thine eyes on bloody death oft look'd?
Do it thyself.

Alwy. If you, my Lord, will put this trust in me,
Swear that when after-rumours shall arise,
As like there may, your faith will be unshaken.

Ethw. Yes; I will truly trust thee—(*vehemently, after a short pause.*)
No, I will not!
I'll trust to no man's vision but mine own.
Is the moon dark to-night?

Alwy. It is, an please you.

Ethw. And will be so to-morrow?

Alwy. Yes, my Lord.

Ethw. When all is still'd in sleep——I hear a noise.

Alwy. Regard it not, it is the whisp'ring winds
Along those pillar'd walls.

Ethw. It is a strange sound, tho'. Come to my chamber,
I will not here remain: come to my chamber,
And do not leave me till the morning break.
I am a wretched man! [EXEUNT.

ACT III.

SCENE I. A GLOOMY VAULTED APARTMENT IN AN OLD CASTLE, WITH NO WINDOWS TO IT, AND A FEEBLE LIGHT BURNING IN ONE CORNER.

Enter EDWARD from a dark recess near the bottom of the stage, with slow pensive steps, frequently stopping as he advances, and remaining for some time in a thoughtful posture.

Ed. Doth the bright sun from the high arch of heaven,
In all his beauteous robes of flecker'd clouds,
And ruddy vapours, and deep glowing flames,
And softly varied shades, look gloriously?
Do the green woods dance to the wind? the lakes
Cast up their sparkling waters to the light?
Do the sweet hamlets in their bushy dells
Send winding up to heaven their curling smoke
On the soft morning air?
Do the flocks bleat, and the wild creatures bound
In antic happiness? and mazy birds
Wing the mid air in lightly skimming bands?
Ay, all this is; all this men do behold;
The poorest man. Even in this lonely vault,
My dark and narrow world, oft do I hear
The crowing of the cock so near my walls,
And sadly think how small a space divides me
From all this fair creation.
From the wide spreading bounds of beauteous nature
I am alone shut out; I am forgotten.
Peace, peace! he who regards the poorest worm
Still cares for me, albeit he shends me sorely.
This hath its end. Perhaps, small as these walls,
A bound unseen divides my dreary state
From a more beauteous world: that world of souls,
Fear'd and desir'd by all; a veil unseen
Which soon shall be withdrawn. (*Casts up his eyes to heaven, and turning, walks silently to the bottom of the stage, then advancing again to the front.*)
The air feels chill; methinks it should be night.
I'll lay me down: perchance kind sleep will come,
And open to my view an inward world
Of gairish fantasies, from which nor walls,
Nor bars, nor tyrant's power can shut me out.
(*He wraps himself in a cloak, and lies down.*)

Enter a RUFFIAN, stealing up softly to him as supposing him asleep. EDWARD, hearing him, uncovers his face, and then starts up immediately.

Ed. What art thou?
Or man or sprite? Thou lookest wond'rous stern:
What dost thou want? Com'st thou to murder me?

Ruff. Yes, I am come to do mine office on thee;
Thy life is wretched, and my stroke is sure.

Ed. Thou sayest true; yet, wretched as it is,
It is my life, and I will grapple for it.

Ruff. Full vainly wilt thou strive, for thinkest thou
We enter walls like these, with changeling hearts,
To leave our work undone?

Ed. We, sayest thou?
There are more of you then?

Ruff. Ay, ay, there are enow to make it sure;
But, if thou wilt be quiet, I'll do't myself.
Mine arm is strong; I'll give no second stroke;
And all escape is hopeless.

Ed. What, thinkest thou I'll calmly stretch my neck
Until thou butch'rest me?
No, by good heaven! I'll grapple with thee still,

And die with my blood hot! *(putting himself in a posture of defence.)*

Ruff. Well, since thou'lt have it so, thou soon shalt see
If that my mates be lovelier than myself.
[Exit.

Ed. O that I still in some dark cell could rest,
And wait the death of nature! *(looking wildly round upon the roof and walls of the vault.)*
Nor stone, nor club, nor beam to serve my need!
Out from the walls, ye flints, and fill my grasp!
Nought! nought! Is there not yet within this nook
Some bar or harden'd brand that I may clutch?

[Exit *hastily into the dark recess, and is followed immediately by two* Ruffians, *who enter by the opposite side, and cross the stage after him.*

Scene II.—An apartment adjoining to the former, with a door leading to it at the bottom of the stage.

Enter Alwy with a stern anxious face, and listens at the door; then enter, by the opposite side, Ethwald with a very haggard countenance.

Ethw. Dost thou hear aught?

Alwy. No, nothing.

Ethw. But thou dost:
Is it not done?

Alwy. I hope it is, my Lord.

Ethw. Thou doubtest, then.—It is long past the hour
That should have lapp'd it. Hark! I hear a noise.

(A noise heard within of people struggling.)

Alwy. They're dealing with him now. They struggle hard.

Ethw. *(turning away with horrour and putting his hands upon his ears.)*
Ha! are we then so near it? This is horrid! *(after a pause.)*
Is it not done yet? Dost thou hear them still?

Alwy. I hear them still: they struggle harder now.

(The noise within heard more distinctly.)

Ethw. By hell's dark host, thy fiends are weak of arm,
And cannot do their task! He will break forth
With all the bloody work half done upon him!
(running furiously to the door, and then shuddering, and turning away from it.)
No, no, I cannot go! do thou go in,
And give thy strength. Let him be still'd i' the instant!

(A noise heard within of one falling.)

Alwy. There's no need now. Did you not hear him fall?
(A groan heard within.) And that groan, too?
List, list! the deed is done.

(They both retire from the door, and Ethw. *leaning his back against the wall, looks stedfastly towards it, in silent expectation, whilst it is seen to open slowly a little way, then shut, then open again, without any one appearing.)*

Ethw. What may this mean? This pause is horrible:
Will they or enter quickly, or forbear!

Enter First Ruffian, with his hands and clothes bloody, and all his hair and dress in disorder, like one who has been struggling hard. Enter soon after him Sec. Ruffian in a similar plight.

Alwy. *(eagerly.)* Ye've done it: is he dead?

First Ruff. He is still'd now, but with such horrid strength
He grappled with us! we have had fell work.

Alwy. Then let us see the body.

First Ruf. Yes, enter if it please ye.

Alwy. Be pleas'd, my Lord—*(to* Ethw.)

Ethw. Pray thee be satisfied: I cannot go.

Alwy. *(to the* Ruffians.) Bring ye the body hither.
[Exeunt Ruffians.

(A silent pause. Re-enter Ruffians *bearing the body, and laying it down before* Ethw.)
Look here, my Lord, and be well satisfied:
It is his very face, tho' somewhat changed
With long confinement in these sickly damps,
And the convulsive throes of violent death.

Ethw. *(first shrinking from it with horror, then commanding himself, and looking upon it for some time stedfastly.)*
Yes, changed indeed! and yet I know it well.
Ah! changed indeed! Much he must needs have suffer'd
In his lone prison-house. Thou bruised flower!
And hast thou struggled all so bravely too
For thy most wretched life? Base, bloody work!
Remove it from my sight. *(turning hastily from it.)*

Alwy. What farther orders would you give these men?

Ethw. Away! speak to me not! thou'st made me curs'd!
Would all the realm of Mercia I had lost,
Ere it had come to this!
Once in the battle's heat I saved his life,
And he did bless me for it. *(beating his forehead distractedly.)*

Alwy. Nay, my good Lord, be not so keenly moved.
Where shall we lay the body?

Ethw. Thou and those fiends do with it as ye will:
It is a damned work!
[Exit *hastily.*

Alwy. *(to* First Ruf.) Come thou with me. *(to* Sec. Ruf.)
We will return anon;
Meanwhile remain thou here and watch the corpse.

[Exeunt Alwy *and* First Ruffian.

Sec. Ruf. *(alone.)* Watch it! I would not watch it here alone
For all my Ruffian's hire. *(throws a coarse cloth over the body, and exit hastily.)*

Scene III.—A Saxon hall in the former castle.

Enter Elb. and Dwina, talking earnestly as they enter.

Elb. But didst thou truly question ev'ry groom,
And the stern keeper of that postern gate?
Dwi. I have, but no one knew that he is absent.
'Twas dark night when the king went forth, and Alwy
Alone was with him. This is all I know.
Elb. Thus secretly, at night!—Sexford's castle
Is not far distant.—That distracted maid—
If this be so, by the true royal blood
That fills my veins, I'll be reveng'd! What mean'st thou? (*seeing* Dwina *shake her head piteously*.
Dwi. Alas, you need not fear: far distant stand
The towers of Ethelbert; and that poor maid
With the quiet dead has found at last her rest.
Elb. And is't not well? Why dost thou shake thy head,
As tho' thou told'st sad news?—Yet what avails it?
I, ne'ertheless, must be a humble mate,
With scarcely e'en the semblance of a queen,
And bow my head whilst Mollo's son doth say,
"Be silent, wife."—Shall I endure all this?
O Edward! gentle Ethling! thou who once
Didst bear the title of my future lord,
Would'st thou have us'd me thus! I'll not endure it.
Dwi. Yet be more patient.
Elb. Be patient, say'st thou? go to, for I hate thee
When thou so calmly talk'st. Tho' seemingly,
I oft before his keen commanding eye
Submissive am, think'st thou I am subdued?
No, by my royal race, I'll not endure it:
I will unto the bishop with my wrongs!
Rever'd and holy men shall do me right.
And here he comes unsent for: this my hope
Calls a good omen.

Enter Hexulf.

Good and holy father,
I crave your blessing.
Hex. Thou hast it, royal daughter. Art thou well?
Thou seem'st disorder'd.
Elb. Yes, rev'rend father, I am sorely gall'd
Beneath a heavy and ignoble yoke;
My crowned head is in subjection bow'd,
Like meanest household dame; and thinkest thou
That it becomes the daughter of a king,
The chief descendant of your royal race,
To bear all this, and say that she is well?
Hex. My daughter, your great Lord, indeed, is form'd
Of soul more stern than was the gentle Edward,
On whom your maiden fancy first was taught
To dwell with sanguine hope——
Elb. O holy Hexulf! thou hast nam'd a name
Which to my conscience gives such secret pangs!
Oh! I have done such wrong to that sweet youth,
My heart bleeds at the cruel thought. I would—
Yea, there is nothing that I would not do
In reparation of the wrong I've done him.
Speak, my good father, if thou aught canst say!
Edward, 'tis said, has many powerful friends
In secret still devoted to his cause,
And not far distant stands his dreary tower.
O speak to me! Thou turn'st away thy head
Disturb'd and frowningly: hast thou no counsel,
For a soul-smitten and distracted woman?
(*laying her clasped hands earnestly on his shoulder, as he turns from her much displeased.*)
Hex. Daughter, forbear! you are, indeed, distracted.
Ethwald, by right of holy bands your lord,
Is in his seat too firmly fix'd; and Edward
Is only by some restless Thanes desired,
Under the influence of that dark wizard,
That heretic, who still ensnares the young.
Be wise then, I beseech you, and, in peace,
Live in the meek subjection of a wife.
Elb. (*stepping back from him with haughty contempt.*)
And so, meek, holy man, this is your counsel,
Breath'd from the gentle spirit of your state.
I've seen the chaffings of your saintly ire,
Restrain'd with less concern for sober duty,
When aught pertaining to your priestly rights
Was therein touch'd.
Dwi. Hush! Ethelbert approaches with his friends.
They come, methinks, at an unwonted hour.
Hex. That artful heretic regards not times.
His spells still show to him the hour best suits
His wicked purposes.
Dwi. Heaven save us all! methinks at his approach
The air grows chill around us, and a hue
Of strange unnat'ral paleness spreads o'er all.
Elb. (*to* Dwi.) Peace, fool! thy fancy still o'ertops thy wit.

Enter Selred, Ethelbert, and Hereulf.

Eth. In your high presence, gracious dame, we are
Thus early visitors, upon our way
To crave admittance to the royal chamber.
Is the king stirring yet? Forgive my boldness.
Elb. Good Ethelbert, thou dost me no offence.
And you, lord Selred, and brave Hereulf, too;
I bid good morrow to you all. The king

Is not within his chamber: unattended
Of all but Alwy, at the close of night
He did go forth, and is not yet return'd.

Sel. This much amazes me: the moon was dark,
And cold and rudely blew the northern blast.

Dwi. (*listening.*) Hark! footsteps sound along the secret passage:
Look to yon door, for something moves the bolt.
The king alone that sacred entry treads.

Enter ETHWALD from a small secret door, followed by ALWY, and starts back upon seeing ETHELBERT, &c.

Eth. (*recovering from his confusion.*)
A good and early morrow to you all;
I little thought—You are astir by times.

Eth. The same to you, my Lord, with loving duty.

Sel. And you too, royal brother, you are moving
At an unwonted hour. But you are pale;
A ghastly hollow look is in your eyes;
What sudden stratagem of nightly war
Has call'd you forth at such untimely season?
The night was dark, and cold, the north wind blew,
And, if that I can read that alter'd brow,
You come not back unscath'd.

Ethw. (*confused.*) No, I am well.—The blast has beat against me,
And tossing boughs my tangled path-way cross'd—
In sooth I've held contention with the night.

Sel. Yea, in good sooth, thou lookest, too, like one
Who has contention held with damned sprites.
Hast thou not cross'd that glen where, as 'tis said,
The restless ghost of a dead murd'rer stalks!
Thou shudd'rest and art pale: O thou hast seen it!
Thou hast, indeed, the haggard face of one
Who hast seen fearful things.

Ethw. Thou'rt wild and fanciful: I have seen nothing:
I am forespent and faint: rest will restore me.
Much good be to you all! (*going.*)

Eth. (*preventing him.*) Nay, on your royal patience, gracious king,
We must a moment's trespass make, to plead
For one, upon whose brave but gentle soul
The night of thraldom hangs———

Ethw. (*shrinking back.*)
I know—I know thy meaning—speak it not.
It cannot be—There was a time—'tis past.

Sel. O say not so: the time for blessed mercy
Is ever present. For the gentle Edward
We'll pledge our lives, and give such hostages
As shall secure your peace.

Eth. Turn not away;
We plead for one whose meek and gen'rous soul
Most unaspiring is, and full of truth;
For one who loved you, Ethwald; one by nature
Form'd for the placid love of all his kind;
One who did ever in your growing fame
Take most unenvious joy. Such is our thrall.
Yea, and the boon that we do crave for him
Is but the free use of his cramped limbs,
And leave to breathe, beneath the cope of heaven,
The wholesome air; to see the cheering sun,
To be again reckon'd with living men.
(*kneeling and clasping his knees.*)

Ethw. Let go, dark Thane: thou rack'st me with thy words!
They are vain sounds—the wind hast wail'd as thou dost,
And pled as sadly too. But that must be
What needs must be. Reckon'd with living men!
Would that indeed—O would that this could be!
The term of all is fix'd.—Good night to you—
I—I should say good morning, but this light
Glares strangely on mine eyes. (*breaking from* Eth.)

Sel. (*following him.*) My dearest brother! by a brother's love!

Ethw. (*putting him away with great agitation.*)
My heart no kindred holds with human thing.

(EXIT *quickly in great perturbation, followed by* ALWY.

Sel. and *Hereulf* (*looking expressively at each other, and then at* Ethelbert.)
Good Ethelbert, what ails thee?

Her. Thy fix'd look has a dreadful meaning in it.

Eth. Let us be gone.

Sel. No, do not yield it so. I still will plead
The gentle Edward's cause: his frowns I fear not.

Eth. Come, come! there is no cause:
Edward is free.

Sel. How so? thou speak'st it with a woful voice.

Eth. Is not the disembodied spirit free?

Sel. Ha! think'st thou that? No, no! it cannot be!

Her. (*stamping on the ground, and grasping his sword.*)
I'll glut my sword with the foul murd'rer's blood,
If such foul deed hath been!

Eth. Hush, hush! intemp'rate boy! Let us be gone.

[EXEUNT Eth. Sel. *and* Her.

Elb. (*to* Dwi.) Heard'st thou how they conceive it?

Dwi. Ay, mercy! and it is a fearful thought:
It glanc'd e'en o'er my mind before they spoke.

Elb. Thou'rt silent, rev'rend father, are thy thoughts
Of such dark hue? (*with solemn earnestness to* Hex.)

Hex. Heaven's will be done in all things! erring man

Bows silently. Good health attend your greatness.

Elb. Nay, go not yet, good Hexulf! in my closet
I much desire some converse with thee. Thou,
Belike, hast misconceiv'd what I have utter'd
In unadvised passion, thinking surely
It bore some meaning 'gainst my lord the king.

Hex. No, gracious daughter, I indeed receiv'd it
As words of passion. You are mov'd, I see;
But let not this dismay you. If the king
Has done the deed suspicion fastens on him,
We o'er his mind shall hold the surer sway.
A restless penitent will docile prove
To priestly counsel: this will be our gain.
But in your closet we'll discourse of this.
Heaven's will be done in all things!

[Exeunt.

SCENE IV.—THE KING'S CHAMBER.

Enter Ethwald with a thoughtful miserable look, and stands silently muttering to himself, when Alwy enters in haste, followed by an Officer.

Alwy. Pardon, my Lord: we bring you pressing tidings.

Ethw. (*angrily.*) Shall I ne'er rest in peace in mine own chamber?
Ha! would that peace were there! You bring me tidings;
And from what quarter come they?

Alwy. From Utherbald, who holds your western fortress.

Ethw. He doth not yield, I hope, unto the foe? It is my strongest hold, and may
The strength of Wessex and of Britain join'd.

Of. True, king, but famine all things will subdue.

Ethw. He has surrender'd then—by heaven and hell
I'll have his head for this!

Alwy. No, royal Ethwald,
It is not yet so bad. But this brave man,
Commission'd by himself, will tell you all.

Ethw. Speak, warriour: then he holds the fortress still?

Of. He does, my Lord, but much he lives in fear
He shall not hold it long, unless your highness
Will give your warrant to release the prisoners;
Those ill designing Mercians whom your wisdom
Under his guard has placed.
He bade me say the step is dangerous;
But, if it is not done, those idle mouths
Consuming much, will starve him, and his men
Into compliance with the foe's demand.
What is your sov'reign will? for on the instant
I must return.

Ethw. Tell him this is no time for foolish hazard.
Let them be put to death.

Of. (*shrinking back.*) Must I return with this? all put to death?

Ethw. Yes, I have said: didst thou not hear my words?

Of. I heard, in truth, but mine ears strangely rung.
Good saints there are, my Lord, within our walls,
Close pris'ners kept, of war-bred men alone,
Of whom, I trow, there scarcely is a man
Who has not some fair stripling by his side
Sharing the father's bonds, threescore and ten;
And must they all——

Ethw. I understand thee, fool.
Let them all die! have I not said it? Go;
Linger not here, but bear thy message quickly.

[Exit Officer *sorrowfully.*

(*angrily to* Alwy.) What! thou look'st on me too, as if, forsooth,
Thou wert amaz'd at this. Perceiv'st thou not
How hardly I'm beset to keep the power
I have so dearly bought? Shall this impede me?
Let infants shrink! I have seen blood enough;
And what have I to do with mercy now?

(*stalking gloomily away, then returning.*)

Selred and Ethelbert, and fiery Hereulf,
Are to their castles sullenly retired,
With many other warlike Thanes. The storm
Is gath'ring round me, but we'll brave it nobly.

Alwy. The discontented chiefs, as I'm inform'd
By faithful spies, are in the halls of Hereulf
Assembled, brooding o'er their secret treason.

Ethw. Are they? Then let us send a chosen band
And seize them unprepared. A nightly march
Will bring them near his castle. Let us then
Immediate orders give; the time is precious.

[Exeunt.

ACT IV.

AN APARTMENT IN THE ROYAL CASTLE OR CHIEF RESIDENCE OF ETHWALD. DWINA AND SEVERAL OF THE LADIES SERVING THE QUEEN ARE DISCOVERED AT WORK; SOME SPINNING, SOME WINDING COLOURED YARNS FOR THE LOOM, AND SOME EMBROIDERING AFTER A RUDE FASHION.

Dwi. (*looking over the* First Lady's *work.*
How speeds thy work? the queen is now impatient;
Thou must be diligent.

First Lad. Nine weary months have I, thou knowest well,
O'er this spread garment bent, and yet, thou seest,
The half is scarcely done. I lack assistance.
Dwi. And so thou dost, but yet in the wide realm
None can be found but such as lack the skill
For such assistance. All those mingled colours,
And mazy circles, and strange carved spots,
Look, in good sooth, as tho' the stuff were strew'd
With rich and curious things: tho' much I fear
To tell you what no easy task would prove.
Sec. Lad. There lives a dame in Kent, I have been told,
Come from some foreign land, if that indeed
She be no cunning fiend in woman's garb,
Who, with her needle, can most cunningly
The true and perfect semblance of real flowers,
With stalk and leaves, as fairly fashion out
As if upon a summer bank they grew.
First Lad. Ay, ay! no doubt! thou hear'st strange tales, I ween.
Didst thou not tell us how, in foreign lands
Full far from this, the nice and lazy dames
Do set foul worms to spin their silken yarn?
Ha, ha! (*they all laugh.*)
Sec. Lad. (*angrily.*) I did not say so.
First Lad. Nay, nay, but thou didst! (*laughing.*)
Sec. Lad. Thou didst mistake me wilfully, in spite,
Malicious as thou art!
Dwi. I pray you wrangle not! when ladies work
They should tell pleasant tales or sweetly sing,
Not quarrel rudely, thus, like villain's wives.
Sing me, I pray you now, the song I love.
You know it well: let all your voices join.
Omnes. We will, good Dwina.

SONG.

Wake a while and pleasant be,
Gentle voice of melody.

Say, sweet carol, who are they
Who cheerly greet the rising day?
Little birds in leafy bower;
Swallows twitt'ring on the tower;
Larks upon the light air borne;
Hunters rous'd with shrilly horn;
The woodman whistling on his way;
The new-wak'd child at early play,
Who barefoot prints the dewy green,
Winking to the sunny sheen;
And the meek maid who binds her yellow hair,
And blythly doth her daily task prepare.

Say, sweet carol, who are they
Who welcome in the ev'ning grey?
The housewife trim and merry lout,
Who sit the blazing fire about;
The sage a conning o'er his book;
The tired wight, in rushy nook
Who half asleep, but faintly hears
The gossip's tale hum in his ears;
The loosen'd steed in grassy stall;
The Thanes feasting in the hall;
But most of all the maid of cheerful soul,
Who fills her peaceful warriour's flowing bowl.
Well hast thou said! and thanks to thee,
Voice of gentle melody!

Dwi. (*to* Third Lady, *who sits sad and pensive.*)
What is the matter, Ella? Thy sweet voice
Was wont to join the song.
Ella. Ah, woe is me! within these castle walls;
Under this very tower in which we are,
There be those, Dwina, who no sounds do hear
But the chill winds that o'er their dungeons howl;
Or the still tinkling of the water-drops
Falling from their dank roofs, in dull succession,
Like the death watch at sick men's beds. Alas!
Whilst you sing cheerly thus, I think of them.
Dwi. Ay, many a diff'rent lot of joy and grief
Within a little compass may be found.
Under one roof the woeful and the gay
Do oft abide; on the same pillow rest.
And yet, if I may rightly judge, the king
Has but small joy above his wretched thralls.
Last night I listen'd to his restless steps,
As oft he paced his chamber to and fro,
Right o'er my head! and I did hear him utter
Such heavy groans!
First Lady. (*with all the others gathering about* Dwina *curiously.*)
Didst thou? And utter'd he no other sound?
I've heard it whisper'd, at the dead of night
He sees strange things.
All. (*speaking together.*) O tell us, Dwina! tell us!
Dwi. Out on you all! you hear such foolish tales!
He is himself the ghost that walks the night,
And cannot rest.
Ella. Belike he is devising in his mind
How he shall punish those poor prisoners,
Who were in Herculf's towered halls so lately
Surpriz'd, and in these hollow vaults confined.
First Lad. No marvel that it should disturb him much,
When his own brother is amongst the guilty.
There will be bloody doings soon, I trow!
Dwi. Into the hands of good and pious Hexulf
The rebels, will be put, so to be punish'd
As he in holy zeal shall see it meet.
Ella. Then they will dearly suffer!
Dwi. That holy man no tortures will devise
Ella. Yes, so perchance, no tortures of the flesh:
But there be those that do upon the soul
The rack and pincer's work.

Is he not grandson to that vengeful chief,
Who, with the death-axe lifted o'er his head,
Kept his imprison'd foe a live-long night,
Nor, till the second cock had crow'd the morn,
Dealt him the clemency of death? Full well
He is his child I know!

Dwi. What aileth thee? art thou bewitched also?
Lamentest thou that cursed heretics
Are put in good men's power? The sharpest punishment
O'er-reaches not their crime.

Ella. O Dwina, Dwina! thou hast watch'd by me
When on a sick-bed laid, and held my head,
And kindly wept to see my wasted cheek,
And lov'st thou cruelty? It cannot be!

Dwi. No, foolish maiden! mercy to such fiends were cruelty.

Ella. Such fiends! Alas! do not they look like men?
Do they not to their needful brethren do
The kindly deeds of men? Yea, Ethelbert
Within his halls a houseless Thane maintain'd,
Whose substance had been spent in base attempts
To work his ruin.

Dwi. The blackest fiends of all most saintly forms
Oft wear. Go, go! thou strangely art deluded.
I tremble for thee! get thee hence and pray,
If that the wicked pity of thy heart
May be forgiven thee.

Enter a LADY eagerly.

Come, damsels, come! along the gallery,
In slow procession holy Hexulf walks,
With saintly Woggarwolfe, a fierce chief once,
But now a cowled priest of marv'llous grace.
They bear some holy relics to the queen,
Which, near the royal couch with blessings laid,
Will to the king his wonted rest restore.
Come, meet them on their way, and get a blessing.

Dwi. We will all gladly go. [EXEUNT.

SCENE II.—A ROYAL APARTMENT, LIGHTED ONLY BY THE MOON THRO' THE HIGH ARCHED WINDOWS.

Enter ETHWALD, as if just risen from bed, loose and disordered, but bearing a drawn sword in his hand.

Ethw. Still must this heavy closeness thus oppress me?
Will no fresh stream of air breathe on my brow,
And ruffle for a while this stilly gloom?
O night, when good men rest, and infants sleep!
Thou art to me no season of repose,
But a fear'd time of waking more intense,
Of life more keen, of misery more palpable.
My rest must be when the broad sun doth glare;
When armour rings and men walk to and fro;
Like a tir'd hound stretch'd in the busy hall,
I needs must lie: night will not cradle me.
(*looking up anxiously to the windows.*)
What, looks the moon still thro' that lofty arch?
Will't ne'er be morn?
If that again in strength
I led mine army on the bold career
So surely shapen in my fancy's eye,
I might again have joy; but in these towers,
Around, beneath me, hateful dungeons yawn,
In every one of which some being lives
To curse me. Ethelbert, and Selred too,
My father's son and my youth's oracle,
Ye too are found with those, who raise to heaven
The prisoner's prayer against my hated head.
I am a lofty tree of growth too great
For its thin soil, from whose wide rooted fangs
The very rocks and earth that foster'd it
Do rend and fall away.—I stand alone!
I stand alone! I thought, alas! to spread
My wide protecting boughs o'er my youth's friends;
But they, like pois'nous brushwood at my root,
Have chok'd my stately growth e'en more than all.
(*musing for some time gloomily.*)
How marr'd and stinted hath my greatness been!
What am I now of that which long ere now
I hop'd to be? O! it doth make me mad
To think of this! By hell, it shall not be!
I would cut off this arm and cast it from me
For vulture's meat, if it did let or hinder
Its nobler fellow.
Yes, they shall die! I to my fortune's height
Will rear my lofty head, and stand alone,
Fearless of storm or tempest.
(*turns round his head upon hearing a noise, and seeing* Elburga *enter at the bottom of the stage with a lamp in her hand, like one risen from bed, he starts back and gazes wildly upon her.*)
What form is that? What art thou? Speak! speak quickly!
If thou indeed art aught of living kind.

Elb. Why didst thou start? Dost thou not know me?

Ethw. No;
Thy shadow seem'd to me a crested youth.

Elb. And with that trusty weapon in thy grasp,
Which thou, of late, e'en on thy nightly couch
Hast sheathless kept, fearest thou living man?

Ethw. It was not living man I fear'd.

Elb. What then?
Last night when open burst your chamber door
With the rude blast, which it is wont to do,
You gaz'd upon it with such fearful looks

Of fix'd expectancy, as one, in truth,
Looks for the ent'ring of some dreadful thing.
Have you seen aught?

Ethw. Get to thy couch. Think'st thou I will be question'd?

Elb. (*putting her hand upon his shoulder soothingly.*)
Nay, be not thus uncourtly! thou shalt tell me.

Ethw. (*shaking her off impatiently.*)
Be not a fool! get thee to sleep, I say!
What dost thou here?

Elb. That which, in truth, degrades my royal birth,
And therefore should be chid; servilely soothing
The fretful moods of one, who, new to greatness,
Feels its unwieldy robe sit on his shoulders
Constrain'd and gallingly.

Ethw. (*going up to her sternly and grasping her by the wrist.*)
Thou paltry trapping of my regal state,
Which with its other baubles I have snatch'd,
Dar'st thou to front me thus? Thy foolish pride,
Like the mock loftiness of mimick greatness,
Makes us contemned in the public eye,
And my tight rule more hateful. Get thee hence;
And be with hooded nuns a gorgeous saint;
For know, thou lackest meekness for a queen.
(Elb. *seems much alarmed, but at the same time walks from him with great assumed haughtiness, and* Exit.)

Ethw. (*alone.*) This woman racks me to the very pitch!
Where I should look for gentle tenderness,
There find I heartless pride. Ah! there was one
Who would have sooth'd my troubles! there was one
Who would have cheer'd——But wherefore think I now? (*pausing thoughtfully.*)
Elburga has of late been to my will
More pliant, oft assuming gentle looks:
What may this mean? under this alter'd guise
What treach'ry lurks? (*pausing again for some time.*)
And yet it should not be:
Her greatness must upon my fortune hang,
And this she knows full well. I've chid her roughly.
Some have, from habit and united interest,
Amidst the wreck of other human ties,
The stedfast duty of a wife retain'd,
E'en where no early love or soft endearments
The bands have knit. Yes; I have been too rough. (*calling to her off the stage.*)
Elburga! dost thou hear me, gentle wife?
And thou com'st at my bidding: this is kindly.

Enter Elburga humbled.

Elb. You have been stern, my Lord. You think, belike,
That I have urged you in my zeal too far
To give those rebel chieftains up to Hexulf,
As best agreeing with the former ties
That bound you to those base ungrateful men,
And with the nature of their chiefest crime,
Foul heresy; but, if in this I err,
Zeal for your safety urged me to offend.

Ethw. I've been too stern with thee, but heed it not.
And in that matter thou hast urged so strongly,
But that I much mistrust his cruelty,
I would resign those miserable men
To Hexulf's vengeful arm; for much he does
Public opinion guide, and e'en to us,
If now provok'd, might prove a dang'rous foe.

Elb. Mistrust him not; he will by oath engage
To use no torture.

Ethw. And yet, methinks, Selred might still be saved.
A holy man might well devise the means
To save a brother.

Elb. He will think of it.
Much do the soldiers the bold courage prize,
And simple plainness of his honest mind;
To slay him might be dangerous.

Ethw. Ha! is it so? They've prais'd him much of late?

Elb. Yes, he has grown into their favour greatly.

Ethw. The changeful fools! I do remember well
They shouted loudly o'er his paltry gift,
Because so simply giv'n, when my rich spoils
Seem'd little priz'd. I like not this. 'Twere well
He were remov'd. We will consider this.

Elb. Come to your chamber then.

Ethw. No, no! into that dark oppressive den
Of horrid thoughts I'll not return.

Elb. Not so!
I've trimm'd the smould'ring fire, and by your couch
The holy things are laid: return and fear not.

Ethw. I thank thy kindness; I, indeed, have need
Of holy things, if that a stained soul
May kindred hold with such. [Exeunt.

Scene III.—A vaulted prison. Herulf, Selred, and three thanes of their party, are discovered walking gloomily and silently up and down.

First Th. (*to the* Second, *who groans heavily.*)
Ah! wherefore, noble partner, art thou thus?
We all are brothers, equal in misfortune;
Let us endure it nobly!

Sec. Th. Ay, so I would, but it o'ercometh me.

1.
Th

E'en this same night, in my far distant home
Fires blaze upon my towers, to guide my steps
Thro' woody dells which I shall pass no more.
E'en on this night I promis'd to return.

First Th. Yet bear it up, and do not dash us thus;
We have all pleasant homes as well as thou,
To which I fear we shall no more return.

Sel. (*to* Third Thane, *who advances from the bottom of the stage.*)
What didst thou look at yonder? Where is Ethelbert?

Third Th. Within yon deep recess, upon his knees;
Just now I saw him, and I turn'd aside,
Knowing the modest nature of his worship.

Enter ETHELBERT from the recess, slowly advancing from the bottom of the stage.

But see, he comes, and on his noble front
A smiling calmness rests, like one whose mind
Hath high communion held with blessed souls.

Her. (*to* Eth.) Where hast thou been, brave Ethelbert? Ah! now
Full well I see! thy countenance declares.
Didst thou remember us? A good man's prayers
Will from the deepest dungeon climb heaven's height,
And bring a blessing down.

Eth. Ye all are men, who with undaunted hearts,
Most nobly have contended for the right:
Your recompense is sure; ye shall be bless'd.

Sec. Th. How bless'd? With what assurance of the mind
Hast thou pray'd for us? Tell us truly, Ethelbert;
As those about to die, or those who yet
Shall for a term this earthly state retain?
Such strong impress'd ideas oft foreshew
Th' event to follow.

Eth. Man, ever eager to foresee his doom,
With such conceits his fancy fondly flatters,
And I too much have given my mind to this;
But let us now, like soldiers on the watch,
Put our soul's armour on, alike prepared
For all a soldier's warfare brings. In heav'n
He sits, who on the inward war of souls
Looks down, as one beholds a well-fought field,
And nobly will reward the brave man's struggle.
(*raising his clasped hands fervently.*)
O let him now behold what his weak creatures,
With many cares and fears of nature weak,
Firmly relying on his righteous rule,
Will suffer cheerfully! Be ye prepared!

Her. We are prepared: what say ye, noble colleagues?

First Th. If that I here a bloody death must meet,
And in some nook unbless'd, far from the tombs
Of all mine honour'd race, these bones be laid,
I do submit me to the will of Heaven.

Third Th. E'en so do I in deep submission bow.

Second Th. If that no more within my op'ning gates
My children and my wife shall e'er again
Greet my return, or this chill'd frame again
E'er feel the kindly warmth of home, so be it!
His blessed will be done who ruleth all!

Her. If these nerv'd arms, full in the strength of youth,
Must rot i' the earth, and all my glorious hopes
To free this land, with which high beat this heart,
Must be cut off i' th' midst, I bow my spirit
To its Almighty Lord; I murmur not.
Yet, O that it had been permitted me
To have contended in that noble cause!
Low must I sleep in an unnoted grave,
Whilst the oppressor of my native country
Riots in brave men's blood!

Eth. Peace, noble boy! he will not riot long.
They shall arise, who for that noble cause,
With better fortune, not with firmer hearts
Than we to th' work have yoked, will bravely strive.
To future heroes shall our names be known;
And in our graves of turf we shall be bless'd.

Her. Well then, I'm satisfied: I'll smile in death;
Yea, proudly will I smile! it wounds me not.

Eth. How, Selred? thou alone art silent here:
To Heaven's high will what off'ring makest thou?

Sel. Nothing, good Ethelbert. What can a man
Little enriched with the mind's rare treasure,
And of th' unrighteous turmoil of this world
Right weary grown, to his great Maker offer?
Yet I can die as meekly as ye will,
Albeit of his regard it is unworthy.

Eth. Give me thine hand, brave man! Well hast thou said!
In truth thy off'ring far outprizes all;
Rich in humility. Come, valiant friends;
It makes my breast beat high to see you thus
For fortune's worst prepar'd with quiet minds.
I'll sit me down awhile: come, gather round me,
And for a little space the time beguile
With the free use and interchange of thought:
Of that which no stern tyrant can controul.
(*they all sit down on the ground.*)

Her. (*to* Eth.) Nay, on my folded mantle do thou sit.

Eth. I thank thee, but I feel no cold. My children!
We do but want, methinks, a blazing fire,
To make us thus a friendly chosen circle
For converse met. Then we belike would talk
Of sprites, and magic power, and marv'llous things,
That shorten weary hours; now let us talk
Of things that do th' inquiring mind of man

With nobler wonder fill; that state unseen,
With all its varied mansions of delight,
To which the virtuous go, when like a dream
Smote by the beams of op'ning day, this life
With all its shadowy forms, fades into nothing.

First Th. Ay, Ethelbert, thou'rt full of sacred lore;
Talk thou of this, and we will gladly hear thee.
How think'st thou we shall feel, when, like a nestling,
Burst from its shell, we wake to this new day?

Eth. Why e'en, methinks, like to the very thing
To which, good Thane, thou hast compared us:
For here we are but nestlings, and I trow,
Pent up i' the dark we are. When that shall open
Which human eye hath ne'er beheld, nor mind
To human body link'd, hath e'er conceiv'd,
Grand, awful, lovely:—O what form of words
Will body out my thoughts!—I'll hold my peace.
(*covers his head with his hand, and is silent for a moment.*)
Then like a guised band, that for a while
Has mimick'd forth a sad and gloomy tale,
We shall these worthless weeds of flesh cast off
And be the children of our father's house.

Her. (*eagerly.*) But what say'st thou of those who doff these weeds
To clothe themselves in flames of endless woe?

Eth. Peace to thee! what have we to do with this?
Let it be veil'd in night!

Her. Nay, nay, good Ethelbert!
I fain would know what foul oppression earns;
And please my fancy with the after doom
Of tyrants, such as him beneath whose fangs
Our wretched country bleeds. They shall be cursed:
O say how deeply!

Eth. Hereulf, the spirit of him thou call'st thy master,
Who died for guilty men, breathes not in thee.
Dost thou rejoice that aught of human kind
Shall be accursed?

Her. (*starting up*) If not within the fiery gulph of woe
His doom be cast, there is no power above!

Eth. For shame, young man! this ill beseems thy state:
Sit down, and I will tell thee of this Ethwald.

Sel. (*rising up greatly agitated.*)
O no! I pray thee do not talk of him!
The blood of Mollo has been Mercia's curse.

Eth. Sit down; I crave it of you both; sit down,
And wear within your breast a manlier spirit.
(*pointing to* Her. *to sit close by him.*)
Nay, here, my son, and let me take thy hand.
Thus by my side, in his fair op'ning youth,
Full oft has Ethwald sat and heard me talk,
With, as I well believe, a heart inclin'd,
Tho' somewhat dash'd with shades of darker hue,
To truth and kindly deeds.
But from this mixed seed of good and ill,
One baleful plant in dark strength rais'd its head,
O'ertopping all the rest; which fav'ring circumstance
Did foster up unto a growth so monstrous,
That underneath its wide and noxious shade
Died all the native plants of feebler stem.
O I have wept for him, as I have lain
On my still midnight couch! I try'd to save him,
But ev'ry means against its end recoil'd.
Good Selred, thou rememb'rest well that night
When to the Female Druid's awful cave
I led thy brother.

Sel. I remember well.

(*all the* Thanes *speaking at once, eagerly.*)
Ay, what of that? We've heard strange tales of it?

Eth. At my request the Arch Sister there receiv'd him;
And tho' she promis'd me she would unfold
Such things as might a bold ambitious mind
Scare from its wishes, she, unweetingly,
Did but the more inflame them.

Her. Ha! what say'st thou?
Did she not shew the form of things to come
By fix'd decrees, unsubject to her will?

Eth. She shew'd him things, indeed, most wonderful;
Whether by human arts to us unknown,
Or magic, or the aid of powerful spirits
Call'd forth, I wot not. Hark! I hear a noise.

First Th. I hear without the tread of many feet.
They pull our dungeon's bars: ha, see who come!
Wear they not ruffians' brows?

Sec. Th. And follow'd still by more: a num'rous crew.
What is their business here?

(Enter a band of armed men, accompanied by two Priests, and carrying with them a block, an axe, and a large sheet or curtain, &c.)

Eth. Do not the axe and block borne by those slaves
Tell thee their errand? But we'll face them bravely.
They do not come upon us unawares;
We are prepar'd.—Let us take hands, my friends!
Let us united stand, a worthy band
Of girded trav'llers, ready to depart
Unto a land unknown but yet undreaded.
(*They all take hands, facing about, and waiting the approach of the men with a steady countenance.*)

First Pr. Why look you on us thus with lowering brows?
Can linked hands the keen-edg'd steel resist?

Her. No, Priest, but linked hearts can bid defiance
To the barb'd lightning, if so arm'd withal
Thou didst encounter us. Quick do thine office!

Here six brave heads abide thee, who ne'er yet
Have meanly bow'd themselves to living wight.

First Pr. You are too forward, youth: less will suffice:
One of those guilty heads beneath our axe
Must fall, the rest shall live. So wills our chief.
Lots shall decide our victim: in this urn
Inclosed are your fates. (*Setting down an urn in the middle of the stage upon a small tripod or stand, whilst the chiefs instantly let go hands, and stand gazing upon one another.*)
Ha! have I then so suddenly unlink'd you? (*with a malicious smile.*)
Put forth your hands, brave chiefs: put forth your hands;
And he who draws the sable lot of death,
Full speedy be his doom!
(*A long pause; the chiefs still look upon one another, none of them offering to step forward to the urn.*)
What, pause ye thus, indeed? This hateful urn
Doth but one death contain and many lives,
And shrink ye from it, brave and valiant Thanes?
Then lots shall first be cast, who shall the first
Thrust in his hand into this pot of terrors.

Eth. (*stepping forth.*) No, thou rude servant of a gentle master,
Doing disgrace to thy much honor'd garb,
This shall not be: I am the eldest chief,
And I of right should stand the foremost here.
(*putting his hand into the urn.*)
What Heaven appoints me welcome!

Sel. (*putting in his hand.*)
I am the next: Heaven send me what it lists!

First Th. (*putting in his hand.*)
Here also let me take. If that the race
Of noble Cormac shall be sunk in night,
How small a thing determines!

Sec. Th. (*putting in his hand.*)
On which shall fix my grasp? (*hesitating.*) or this? or this?
No, cursed thing! whate'er thou art I'll have thee.

Third Th. (*putting out his hand with perturbation, misses the narrow mouth of the urn.*)
I wist not how it is: where is its mouth?

First Pr. Direct thy hand more steadily, good Thane,
And fear not thou wilt miss it. (*to* Hereulf.)
Now, youthful chief, one lot remains for thee.
(Hereulf *pauses for a moment, and his countenance betrays perturbation, when* Ethelbert *steps forth again.*)

Eth. No, this young chieftain's lot belongs to me:
He shall not draw. (*putting in his hand quickly and taking out the last lot.*)
Now, Priest, the lots are finish'd.

First. Pr. Well, open then your fates.
(*They each open their lots, whilst* Hereulf *stands looking eagerly in their faces as they open them.*)

Sec. Th. (*opening his and then holding up his hands in extacy.*)
Wife, children, home! I am a living man!

First Th. (*having opened his.*)
I number still with those who breathe the air,
And look upon the light! blest Heaven so wills it.

Third Th. (*looking at his joyfully.*)
Fate is with me! the race of Cormac lives!

Her. (*after looking anxiously first upon* Ethelbert *and then upon* Selred.)
Selred, what is thy lot? is't not dark?

Sel. No, Hereulf.

Her. Oh, Ethelbert! thou smilest on me! alas!
It is a dismal smile! thou art the victim!
Thou shalt not die: the lot of right is mine.
A shade of human weakness cross'd my soul,
Such as before, not in the horrid fields
Of crimson slaughter did I ever feel;
But it is past; now I can bravely die,
And I will have my right.

Eth. (*pushing him affectionately away.*)
Away, my son! It is as it should be.

Her. O if thou wilt entreat me as a man,
Nor slur me with contempt! I do beseech thee
Upon my bended knee! (*kneeling.*) O if thou diest,
I of all living things most wretched am!

Eth. Be temperate, my son! thou art reserv'd
For what the fervid strength of active youth
Can best perform. O take him from me, friends!
(*The* Thanes *take* Hereulf *forcibly from clinging round* Ethelbert, *and he then assuming a softened solemnity.*)
Now, my brave friends, we have together fought
A noble warfare; I am call'd away!
Let me in kind and true affection leave you.

Thanes. (*speaking together.*) Alas, thou art our father and our friend!
Alas, that thou should'st meet this dismal end!

Eth. Ay, true, indeed, it is a dismal end
To mortal feeling; yet within my breast
Blest hope and love, and heaven-ward confidence,
With human frailty so combined are,
That I do feel a wild and trembling pleasure.
Even on this awful verge, methinks I go,
Like a chid infant, from his passing term
Of short disgrace, back to his father's presence.
(*Holding up his hands with a dignified exultation.*)
I feel an awful joy!—Farewell, my friends!
Selred, we've fought in many a field together,
And still as brothers been; take thou, I pray,
This token of my love. And thou, good Wolferc,
I've ever priz'd thy worth: wear thou this ring.

(*To the two other chiefs, giving them also tokens.*)
And you, brave chiefs, I've ever lov'd you both.
And now, my noble Hereulf,
Of all the youth to whom my soul e'er knit,
As with a parent's love, in the good cause,
Thee have I found most fervent and most firm;
Be thine my sword, which in my native hall,
Hung o'er my noble father's arms, thou'lt find,
And be it in thy hands what well thou know'st
It would have been in mine. Farewell, my friends!
God bless you all!

(*They all crowd about him, some kissing his hands, some taking hold of his clothes, except* Hereulf, *who starting away from him, throws himself upon the ground in an agony of grief.* Ethelbert *lifts up his eyes and his hands as if he were muttering a silent blessing over them.*)

First Pr. This may not be! down with those impious hands!
Dar'st thou, foul heretic, before the face
Of hallow'd men, thus mutter prayers accurst?

Eth. Doth this offend you?—O it makes me feel
A spirit for this awful hour unmeet,
When I do think on you, ye hypocrites!

First Pr. Come, come! we waste our time, the heads-man waits.
(*To* Eth.) Prepare thee for the block.

Eth. And will you in the sight of these my friends
Your bloody task perform? Let them retire.

First Pr. Nay, nay, that may not be: our pious Hexulf
Has given his orders.

Sec. Pr. O be not so cruel!
Tho' he has ordered so, yet, ne'ertheless,
We may suspend this veil, and from their eyes
The horrid sight conceal.

First Pr. Then be it so; I grant it.

(*A large cloth or curtain is suspended upon the points of two spears, held up by spearmen, concealing the block and executioner, &c. from the* Thanes.)

First Pr. (*to the men behind the curtain, after a pause.*) Are ye ready?

Voice behind. Yes, we are ready now. (*To* Eth.)
And thou?

Eth. God be my strength! I'm ready also.

(*As the* Priest *is leading* Ethelbert *behind the curtain, he turns about to give a last look to his friends; and they, laying their hands devoutly upon their breasts, bow to him very low. They then go behind the curtain, leaving the* Thanes *on the front of the stage, who stand fixed in silent and horrid expectation; except* Selred, *who sits down upon the ground with his face hid between his knees, and* Hexulf, *who rising suddenly from the ground, looks wildly round, and seeing* Ethelbert *gone, throws himself down again in all the distraction of grief and despair.*)

(*A voice behind, after some noise and bustle of preparation has been heard.*)
Now do'ff his garment, and undo his vest,
Fie on it, there! assist the prisoner.

Sec. Voice. Let some one hold his hands.

Third Voice. Do ye that office. (*a pause of some length.*)

Voice again. Heads-man, let fall thy blow, he gives the sign.

(*The axe is seen lifted up above the curtain: and the sound of the stroke is heard.*)

Thanes. (*shrinking involuntarily, and all speaking at once.*)
The stroke of death is given!

(*The spearmen let fall the curtain, and the body of* Ethelbert *is discovered upon the ground, with a cloth over it; whilst his head is held up by the Executioner, but seen very indistinctly through the spears and pikes of the surrounding Soldiers. The* Thanes *start back, and avert their faces.*)

First Pr. (*coming forward.*)
Rebellious Thanes, ye see a deed of justice.
Here rest ye, and another day of life
Enjoy together: at this hour to-morrow
We'll visit you, and then, by lot determin'd,
Another head must fall. So wills the king.

First Th. What words are these?

Second Th. Do thine ears catch their sense?

Third Th. I cannot tell thee; mine confus'dly sound.

First Pr. (*raising his voice louder.*)
To-morrow at this hour we'll visit you,
And here again, selected by the lot,
Another head must fall. Till then, farewell!
Another day of life enjoy securely:
Much happiness be with you.

(*An involuntary groan bursts from the* Thanes, *and* Hereulf, *starting furiously from the ground, clenching his hands in a menacing posture as the Priests and Spearmen, &c. retire. The scene closes.**)

ACT V.

Scene I.—An open space on the walls of the castle.

Enter Alwy and Hexulf, talking as they enter with violent gesture.

Hex. (*with angry vehemence.*)
Escap'd, say'st thou, with all the rebel chiefs?

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* Should this play ever have the honour of being represented upon any stage, a scene of this kind, in which so many inferior actors would be put into situations requiring the expression of strong passion, might be a disadvantage to it; I should, therefore, recommend having the front of the stage on which the Thanes are, during the last part of the scene, thrown into deep shade, and the light only to come across the back-ground at the bottom of the stage: this would give to the whole a greater solemnity; and by this mean no expression of countenance, but only that of gesture, would be required of them.

Hereulf escap'd? th' arch fiend himself hath done it,
If what thou say'st be true.—It is impossible.
Say'st thou they are escap'd?

Alwy. In very truth they are.

Hex. Then damned treachery has aided them!

Alwy. Nay, rather say, thy artful cruelty
Arm'd them with that which to the weakly frame
Lends a nerv'd giant's strength; despair. From out
The thick and massy wall, now somewhat loose
And jagged grown with time, cemented heaps,
Which scarce two teams of oxen could have mov'd,
They've torn, and found a passage to the moat.
What did it signify in what dire form
Death frown'd upon them, so as they had died?

Hex. Who can foresee events? As well as thou.
I would that one swift stroke had slain them all
Rather than this had been. But Ethelbert
And Selred are secur'd. Was it not Selred
Who on the second night our victim fell?

Alwy. It was, but better had it been for us
Had they been left alive: had they been still
In their own castles unmolested left.
For like a wounded serpent, who, aloft,
The surgy volumes of his mangled length
In agony the more terrific rears
Against his enemy, this maimed compact
Will from thy stroke but the more fiercely rise,
Now fiery Hereulf is their daring leader.
And what have we to look for?

Hex. Dire, bloody vengeance.—O some damned traitor
Hath done this work! it could not else have been!

Alwy. Well, do thou find him out then, if thou canst,
And let thy vengeance fall where lies the sin.

Hex. Doth the king know of this?

Alwy. He doth not yet.

Hex. Then must he be inform'd without delay.

Alwy. As quickly as you please, if that you please
To take that office on yourself, good father;
But as for me, I must right plainly say
I will not venture to say it; no faith! of late
The frame and temper of king, Ethwald's mind
Is chang'd. He ever was in former times
Cheerful, collected, sanguine; for all turns
Of fate prepar'd, like a fair ample lake,
Whose breast receives the azure hue of heaven,
And sparkles gaily in the breezy moon:
But now, like a swoln flood whose course has been
O'er rude opposing rocks and rugged shelves;
Whose turbid waters wear the sullen shade
Of dark o'erchanging banks, and all enchaf'd
Round ev'ry little pebble fiercely roars,
Boiling in foamy circles, his chaf'd spirit
Can bear th' encounter of no adverse thing
To his stern will oppos'd. I may not tell him.

Hex. Be not so fearful! art thou not a man
Us'd to the sudden turns of great men's humours?
Thou best can do it, Alwy. (*soothingly.*)

Alwy. Nay, father, better will it suit your age
And rev'rend state. And he has need, I ween,
Of ghostly counsel too: night after night
He rises from his tossing sleepless couch,
Oft wildly staring round the vacant chamber,
As if his fancy peopled the dark void
With horrid shapes. The queen hath told me this.
Come, look to it, for something must be done.

Hex. I will accompany your homeward steps.
Whilst we consider of it. [Exeunt.

Scene II.—A royal apartment, and a servant discovered busily employed in lighting it up.

Enter to him another Servant.

Sec. Serv. Wilt thou ne'er finish lighting these grim walls?
Will not those lamps suffice?

First Serv. No, by my faith, we want as many more?
For still, thou see'st that pillar'd corner's dark,
(*pointing to a gloomy recess on the other side of the stage.*)
Wherein the eye of conscience-scared folks
Might fearful things espy. I am commanded
To lighten each apartment of this tower
To noon-day pitch.

Sec. Serv. Ay, Uthbert, these are fearful, bloody times!
Ethwald, God knows, has on his conscience laid
A weight of cruel deeds: the executioner
Works for him now in the grim holds of death,
Instead of armed warriours in the field;
And now men steal abroad in twilight's gloom,
To talk of fearful things, not by the blaze
Of cheerful fires, in peaceful cottage, heap'd
With sparkling faggots from the winter store.

First Serv. Ay, thou say'st well; it is a fearful time;
No marvel Ethwald should not love the dark,
In which his fancy shapes all fearful things.

Sec. Serv. What, dost thou think it is his fancy's shapes
He looks upon? No, no: believe me, friend,
Night and the darkness are inhabited

By those who move near neighbours to the living;
Close by their very sides, yet unperceiv'd
By all, but those whose eyes unveiled are
By heavenly power, in mercy or in wrath.
Such proofs of this I've heard.—Last night thou know'st
The royal grooms who near their Master sleep,
In the adjoining chamber much were scar'd
With fearful sounds.

First Serv. I know it not.—Who was it told it thee?
At midnight was it? (*eagerly.*)

Sec. Serv. Yes, come with me to Baldwick, he will tell thee;
He heard it all: thou wilt return in time
To finish, here, thy task. We'll have a horn
Of foaming ale, and thou shalt hear it all.
Good foaming ale: ay, mercy on us all!
We live in fearful times! (*listening.*)

First Serv. (*listening also.*) What shall I do?
I hear the king a speaking angrily,
And coming hitherward. What shall I do?
Shall I remain and face him? nay good faith!
I'll shun the storm: he is engag'd perchance,
Too much to notice may unfinish'd task.
[Exeunt *hastily.*

Enter Ethwald talking angrily to a noble Thane.

Ethw. Nay, nay, these are excuses, noble Edmar,
Not reasons; all our northern troops ere now
Might well have been in readiness. 'Tis plain
Such backward sloth from disaffection springs.
Look to it well:—if with the waning moon,
He and his vassals have not join'd our standard,
I'll hold him as a traitor.

Thane. My royal Lord, be not so wroth with him,
Nor let your noble mind to dark suspicion
So quickly yield. This is the season still,
When unbraced warriours on the rushy floor
Stretch them in pleasing sloth; list'ning to tales
Of ancient crones, or merry harpers' lays,
And batt'ning on the housewife's gusty cheer:
Spring has not yet so temper'd the chill sky
That men will change their warm and shelt'ring roofs
For its cold canopy.

Ethw. O foul befal their gluttony and sloth!
Fie on't! there is no season to the brave
For war unfit. With this moon's waning light,
I will, with those who dare their king to follow,
My northern march begin.

Thane. Then faith, my Lord,
I much suspect your army will be small:
And what advantage may you well expect
From all this haste? E'en three weeks later, still
You will surprise the foe, but ill prepar'd
To oppose invasion. Do then, gracious king,
Listen to friendly counsel, and the while,
Within these walls where ev'ry pleasure courts you,
Like a magnificent and royal king,
Your princely home enjoy.

Ethw. Out on it, man, thou know'st not what thou say'st!
Home hath he none who once becomes a king!
Behind the pillar'd masses of his halls
The dagger'd traitor lurks; his vaulted roofs
Do nightly echo to the whisper'd vows
Of those who curse him; at his costly board
With grinning smile the damned pois'ner sits;
Yea, e'en the void recesses of his chamber,
Void tho' they be unto all eyes but his,
Are peopled——— (*stopping short.*)

Thane. (*eagerly.*) Good my Lord! what do you mean?

Ethw. In the confusion of tumultuous war,
'Midst the terrific shouts of closing foes,
And trampling steeds, and din of bick'ring arms;
Where dying warriours groan unheard, and things
Horrid to nature are as tho' they were not,
Unwail'd, unheeded:
Where the rough chance of each contentious day
Blots out all irksome mem'ry of the past,
All fear of that to follow: where like herds
Of savage beasts on the bleak mountain's side,
Drench'd with the rain, the weary warriours lie,
Whilst nightly tempests howling o'er their heads
Lull them to rest; there is my home, good Thane.

Thane. No marvel, then, my Lord, if to the field
You turn your eager thoughts! I only fear
Your royal arms will in Northumberland
Find no contention worthy of their force;
For rumour says, the northern prince is gone
With his best troops against the Scottish king.

Ethw. If this be true, it is unto my fortune
Most fair occasion; master of the north
I soon shall be, on the west again
Pour like a torrent, big with gather'd strength.
Who told thee this? it breaks upon me, friend,
Like brightning sunbeams thwart a low'ring sky.

Thane. A northern villain brought to me the tale,
And told with circumstances of good credit.

Ethw. Run thou and find him out; I'll wait thee here;
I must have more assurance of this matter.
Quickly, my worthy Edmar! [Exit Thane.
(*alone.*) If that this rumour bears a true report,
Th' opposing rocks on which my rising tide
So long has beat, before me now give way,
And thro' the breach my onward waves shall roll
To the wide limits of their destin'd reach.
Full day, altho' tempestuous it may prove,
Now breaks on me! now come the glorious height,

And the proud front, and the full grasp of power!
Fly, gloomy thoughts, and hideous fantasies,
Back to the sprites that sent you ! England's king
Behind him casts the fears of Mercia's lord.
The north subdued, then stretching to the west
My growing strength——— (*stretching out his arms in the vehemence of action, he turns himself round, directly facing the gloomy recess on the opposite side of the stage.*)
Ha ! doth some gloomy void still yawn before me,
In fearful shade ? (*turning his eyes away hastily from it.*)
No ; I saw nothing : shall I thus be moved
With ev'ry murky nook ? I'll look again.
(*steals a fearful look to the recess, and then starting back, turns away from it with horrour.*)
O they're all there again ! and ev'ry phantom
Mark'd with its grisly wounds, e'en as before.
Ho ! who waits there ? Hugon, I say, ho Hugon !
Come to me ! quickly come !

Enter a GROOM of his chamber.

Groom. Save you, my royal Lord ! What is your pleasure ?
Are you in pain ? Your voice did sound, methought,
With strange unnat'ral strength.
Ethw. Bring me lights here.
Groom. A hundred lamps would scarce suffice, I ween,
To light this spacious chamber.
Ethw. Then let a thousand do it ; must I still
In ev'ry shady corner of my house
See hideous——— quickly go, and do my bidding.
Why star'st thou round thee thus ? dost thou see aught ?
Groom. No, nothing. (*looking round fearfully.*)
Ethw. Thou need'st not look ; 'tis nothing : fancy oft
Deceives the eye with strange and flitting things.
Regard it not, but quickly bring more lamps.
Groom. Nay, good my Lord, shall I remain with you,
And call my fellow ?
Ethw. (*angrily.*) Do as thou art commanded.
[EXIT GROOM.
This man perceives the weakness of my mind.
Am I, indeed, the warlike king of Mercia ?

Re-enter two GROOMS with lamps, which they place in the recess. ETHWALD, not venturing to look on it again till the lights are placed, now turns round to it, and seems relieved.

Ye have done well. (*after a pause, in which he walks several times across the stage, stopping short, and seeing the* Grooms *still there.*)
Why do ye linger here ? I want ye not.
Begone. [EXEUNT Grooms.
But that I would not to those fools
Betray the shameful secret of my mind,
I fain would call them back.
What are these horrours ?
A fearful visitation of a time
That will o'erpass ? O might I so believe it !
Edmar, methinks, ere this might be return'd :
I'll wait for him no more : I'll go myself
And meet him. (*going towards the large arched door by which he entered, he starts back from it with horrour.*)
Ha ! they are there again !
E'en in the very door-way do they front me !
Still foremost Ethelbert and Selred tower
With their new-sever'd necks, and fix on me
Their death-strain'd eye-balls ; and behind them frowns
The murder'd youth, and Oswal's scepter'd ghost :
Whilst seen as if half fading into air,
The pale distracted maid shews her faint form.
Thrice, in this very form and order seen,
They have before me stood. What may it mean ?
I've heard that shapes like these will to the utterance
Of human voice give back articulate sound,
And, having so adjured been, depart.
(*stretching out both his hands, and clenching them resolutely.*)
I'll do it, tho' behind them hell should yawn
With all its unveil'd horrours. (*turning again to the door-way with awful solemnity.*)
If aught ye be but flitting fantasies,
But empty semblance of the form ye wear ;
If aught ye be that can to human voice
Real audience give, and a real sense receive
Of that on which your fix'd and hollow eyes
So stern and fix'dly glare ; I do conjure you
Depart from me, and come again no more !
From me depart ! Full well those ghastly wounds
Have been return'd into this tortur'd breast :
O drive me not unto the horrid brink
Of dire distraction !
Speak, Ethelbert ! O speak, if voice thou hast !
Tell me what sacrifice can soothe your spirits ;
Can still the unquiet sleepers of the grave :
For this most horrid visitation is
Beyond endurance of the boldest mind,
In flesh and blood enrob'd.—It takes no heed,
But fix'dly glares upon me as before.
I speak to empty air : it can be nothing.
Is it not some delusion of the eyes ?
(*rubbing his eyes very hard, and rousing himself.*)
Ah ! still the hideous semblance is before me,
Plain as at first. I cannot suffer this !
(*runs to the lamps, and taking one in each hand, rushes forward in despair to the doorway.*)
They are all gone ! Before the searching light
Resolv'd to nothing !

Enter Hexulf and Alwy.

Ethw. (*turning hastily upon hearing them enter behind him.*)
Ha! is it you? Most happily you come!
Welcome you are, most welcome!

Alwy. Thanks to you, good my Lord! but on my life
This holy bishop and myself are come
Unwillingly, with most untoward tidings.

Ethw Well, use not many words: what now befals?

Hex. The rebel Hereulf and his thralled mates
Have, with more strength than human hands may own,
For that the holy church———

Ethw. Well, well, what meanest thou?
And what should follow this?

Alwy. They've broke their prison walls, and are escap'd.

Ethw. I am glad on't! be it so! In faith I am glad!
We have shed blood enough.

Alwy. Nay, but, my Lord, unto their towers of strength
They will return; where bruiting abroad
Their piteous tale, as 'nighted travellers
To the false plaining of some water fiend,
All men will turn to them; nor can your troops
In safety now begin their northern march
With such fell foes behind them.

Ethw. (*roused.*) Ay, thou say'st true; it is a damned let!
Here falls another rock to bar my way.
But I will on! Come, let us instantly
Set out, and foil them ere they gather strength.

Alwy. This would be well, but that within these walls
Some of their faithful friends are still confin'd,
Who in our absence might disturbance breed,
As but a feeble guard can now be spar'd
To hold the castle. How shall this be settled?
Shall we confine them in the stronger vaults?

Ethw. (*fiercely.*) No, no! I'll have no more imprisonments!
Let them be slain; yea all: even to a man!
This is no time for weak uncertain deeds.
Saw you not Edmar as you hither came?

Alwy. We saw him with a stranger much engaged.
By a faint lamp, near to the eastern tower.

Ethw. Then follow me, and let us find him out.

Hex. We follow you, my Lord.

Ethw. (*as he is about to go out, turning hastily round to* Alwy.)
Bear thou a light.
My house is like a faintly mooned cave,
And hateful shadows cross each murky aisle.
[Exeunt, Alwy bearing a light.

Scene III.—The evening: a wood with a view of Ethwald's castle seen thro' the trees.

Enter Hereulf disguised like a country hind: enter to him, by another path, a Thane, disguised also.

Her. Welcome, my friend! art thou the first to join me?
This as I guess should be th' appointed time:
For o'er our heads have passed on homeward wing
Dark flights of rooks, and daws and flocking birds.
Wheeling aloft with wild dissonant screams;
And from each hollow glen and river's bed,
The white mist slowly steals in fleecy wreaths
Up the dark wooded banks. And yet, methinks,
The deeper shades of ev'ning come not after,
As they are wont, but day is lengthen'd out
Most strangely.

Thane. Seest thou those paly streams of shiv'ring light
So widely spread along the northern sky?
They to the twilight grey that brightness lend
At which thou wonderest. Look up, I pray thee!

Her. (*turning and looking up.*)
What may it mean? it is a beauteous light:

Thane. In truth, I know not. Many a time have I
On hill and heath beheld the changeful face
Of awful night: I've seen the moving stars
Shoot rapidly athwart the sombre sky,
Red fiery meteors in the welkin blaze,
And sheeted lightnings gleam; but ne'er before
Saw I a sight like this. It is belike
Some sign portentous of our coming fate:
Had we not better pause and con awhile
This daring scene, ere yet it be too late?

Her. No, by this brave man's sword! not for an hour
Will I the glorious vengeful deed delay,
Tho' heaven's high dome were flaming o'er my head,
And earth beneath me shook. If it be aught
Portentious, it must come from higher powers;
For demons ride but on the lower clouds,
Or raise their whirlwinds in the nether air.
All blessed spirits still must favour those
Who war on virtue's side: therefore, I say,
Let us march boldly to the glorious work:
It is a sign foretelling Ethwald's fall.
Now for our valiant friends; they must be near.
Ho! holla, ho!

Enter, by different paths in the wood, the other Chiefs, disguised, and gather round Hereulf, he receiving them joyfully.

Welcome! all welcome! you good Thane, and you,
And ev'ry valiant soul, together leagued
In this bold enterprize. Well are we met.
So far we prosper; and my glowing heart
Tells me our daring shall be nobly crown'd.
Now move we cheerly on our way: behold
Those frowning towers, where, e'er the morning watch,
That shall be done, for which, e'en in our graves,

Full many a gen'rous Mercian, yet unborn,
Shall bless our honour'd names.

Chiefs. (*speaking all together.*) We follow you, brave Hereulf.

First Chief. Ay, with true heart, or good or ill betide,
We'll follow you.

Her. Come on! ere this, with fifty chosen men,
Our trusty colleague, near the northern gate,
Attends our signal. Come, ye gen'rous few;
Ye who have groan'd in the foul dungeon's gloom,
Whose gen'rous bosoms have indignant heav'd
To see free men beneath th' oppressor's yoke
Like base-born villains press'd! Now comes the hour
Of virtuous vengeance: on our side in secret
Beats ev'ry Mercian heart: the tyrant now
Trusts not to men: nightly within his chamber
The watch-dog guards his couch, the only friend
He now dare trust, but shall not guard it long.
Follow my steps, and do the gen'rous deeds
Of valiant freemen: Heaven is on our side.
[Exeunt.

Scene IV.—An open space within the walls of the castle, fronting one of the gates: the stage darkened, and the sky lighted up with the aurora borealis, very bright.

Enter by opposite sides Two Officers of the castle.

First Off. Ha! is it thee, my friend?
Thou'st left thy post, I guess, as well as I,
To view this awful sky. Look over head,
Where like a mighty dome, from whose bright centre
Shoot forth those quiv'ring rays of vivid light,
Moving with rapid change on every side,
Swifter than flitting thought, the heavens appear!
Whilst o'er the west in paler brightness gleam
Full many a widely undulating tide
Of silver light; and the dark low'ring east,
Like to a bloody mantle stretched out,
Seems to conceal behind its awful shade
Some dread commotion of the heavenly powers,
Soon to break forth—some grand and unknown thing.

Second Off. It is an awful sight! what may it mean?
Doth it not woes and bloody strife foretell?
I've heard my father talk of things like this.—
When the king's passing sickness shall be gone,
Which has detain'd him from his purpos'd march
Against the rebel chiefs, doubt not, my friend,
We shall have bloody work.

First Off. Ay, but ere that, mayhap, the man of blood
May bleed; and Mercia from the tyrant's grasp—

Second Off. Hush, hush! thou art unwise: some list'ning ear——

First Off. And if there should, what danger? all men now
Harbour such secret thoughts; and those who once
His youthful valour lov'd and warlike feats,
Now loath his cruelty. I'll tell thee something,
(*drawing nearer him mysteriously.*)

Second Off. (*frightened.*) Hush, hush! I will not hear thee! hold thy tongue!
What will't avail, when on the bloody stake
Thy head is fix'd, that all men think as thou dost;
And he who fix'd thy cruel doom to-day
Shall die to-morrow?

First Off. I'm mute, my friend: and now I plainly see
How he may lord it o'er a prostrate land,
Who trembles in his iron tower the while,
With but a surly mastiff for his friend.

Second Off. Nay, do not speak so loud. What men are these?
Who pass the gate just now? shall we not stop them?

Enter some of the leagued Chiefs in disguise through the gate.

First Off. No, do not trouble them. They are, I guess,
Some 'nighted rustics frighten'd with the sky,
Who seek the shelter of man's habitation.
In such an awful hour men crowd together,
As gathering sea-fowl flock before a storm.
With such a welkin blazing o'er our heads,
Shall men each other vex? e'en let them pass.

Enter a crowd of frightened Women and Children.

Second Off. See what a crowd of women this way come,
With crying children clinging to their knees,
And infants in their arms! How now, good matrons?
Where do you run?

First Wom. O do not stop us! to Saint Alban's shrine
We run: there will we kneel and lift our hands,
For that his holy goodness may protect us
In this most awful hour.

Sec. Wom. On, sisters, on!
The fiery welkin rages o'er our heads,
And we are sinful souls: O quickly move!
[Exeunt Women *and* Children.

Sec. Off. I also am, alack! a sinful soul:
I'll follow them, and pray for mercy too.

First Off. I'll to the northern wall, from whence the heavens
In full expanse are seen. [Exeunt *severally.*

Scene V.—Ethwald's apartment: he is discovered sitting by his couch, with his elbows resting upon his knees, and supporting his head between both his hands; the Queen standing by him.

Qu. Why sit you thus, my Lord! it is not well

It wears your strength; I pray you go to rest.
(*a pause, and he makes no answer.*)
These nightly watchings much retard your cure
Be then advis'd! (*a pause, and he still takes no notice.*)
Why are you thus unwilling?
The tower is barr'd, and all things are secure.

Ethw. How goes the hour? is it the second watch?

Qu. No: near the window now, I heard the guard
Exchange the word: the first is but half spent.

Ethw. And does the fearful night still lie before me
In all its hideous length? (*rising up with emotion.*)
O ye successive terms of gloomy quiet!
Over my mind ye pass, like rolling waves
Of dense oppression; whilst deep underneath
Lie all his nobler powers and faculties
O'erwhelmed. If such dark shades must henceforth cross
My checker'd life with still returning horrours,
O let me rest in the foul reptile's hole,
And take from me the being of a man!

Qu. Too much thou givest way to racking thought:
Take this: it is a draught by cunning skill
Compounded curiously, and strongly charm'd;
With secret virtue fill'd—it soothes the mind,
And gives the body rest. (*offering him a cup.*

Ethw. Say'st thou? then in good sooth I need it much.
I thank thee too; thou art a careful wife.
(*Takes the cup, and, as he is about to put it to his lips, stops short and looks suspiciously at her.*)
It has, methinks, a strange unkindly smell.
Taste it thyself: dost thou not take my meaning?
Do thou first drink of it.

Qu. I am in health, my Lord, and need it not.

Ethw. By the dread powers of darkness, thou shalt drink it!
Ay, to the very dregs!

Qu. What, would you cast on me such vile suspicions,
And treat a royal princess like your slave?

Ethw. And so thou art. Thou rear'st thy stately neck,
And whilst I list, thou flarest in men's eyes
A gorgeous queen; but unto me thou art——
I do demand thee, drink it to the dregs.

Qu. (*subdued, and lifting the cup to her lips.*)
Then be convinced how wrongful are thy thoughts.

Ethw. (*preventing her.*) Forbear, I am too slightly mov'd to anger.
I should have known the being of thy state
Is all too closely with my fortune link'd.
Give me the cup. Thou say'st it soothes the mind?
If I, indeed, could rest—(*tastes it.*) It tastes not well:
It is a bitter drug.

Qu. Then give it me again: I'll hie to Dwina,
And get from her that which shall make it sweet.
(*she walks to the door of another apartment, but as she is about to go out,* Ethwald *hurries after her, and catches her by the arm.*)

Ethw. Thou shalt not go and leave me thus alone.

Qu. I'll soon return again, and all around thee
Is light as noon-day.

Ethw. Nay, nay, good wife! it rises now before me
In the full blaze of light.

Qu. Ha! what mean'st thou?

Ethw. The faint and shadowy forms,
That in obscurity were wont to rise
In sad array, are with the darkness fled.
But what avails the light? for now, since sickness
Has press'd upon my soul, in my lone moments,
E'en in the full light of my torch-clad walls,
A horrid spectre rises to my sight,
Close by my side, and plain and palpable,
In all good seeming and close circumstance,
As man meets man.

Qu. Mercy upon us! What form does it wear?

Ethw. My murder'd brother's form.
He stands close by my side: his ghastly head
Shakes horridly upon its sever'd neck,
As if new from the heads-man's stroke; it moves
Still as I move; and when I look upon it,
It looks—No, no! I can no utterance find
To tell thee how it looks on me again.

Qu. Yet, fear not now: I shall not long be absent;
And thou may'st hear my footsteps all the while,
It is so short a space. [Exit Queen.

Ethw. (*returning to the middle of the stage.*)
I'll fix my steadfast eyes upon the ground,
And turn to other things my tutor'd thoughts
Intently. (*after pausing for a little while, with his clenched hands crossed upon his breast, and his eyes fixed upon the ground.*)
It may not be: I feel upon my mind
The horrid sense that preludes still its coming.
Elburga! ho, Elburga! (*putting his hand before his eyes, and calling out with a strong voice of fear.*)

Enter Queen in haste.

Qu. Has't come again?

Ethw. No; but I felt upon my pausing soul
The sure and horrid sense of its approach.
Hadst thou not quickly come, it had ere now
Been frowning by my side. The cup, the cup. (*drinks eagerly.*)

Qu. Heaven grant thee peace!
Wilt thou not send unto the holy priest,
To give thee ghostly comfort?

Ethw. (*shaking his head.*) Away, away! to thee and to thy priests

I have, alas! lent too much heed already.
Qu. Let not your noble spirit thus be shent!
Still bear good heart! these charmed drugs full soon
Will make you strong and vig'rous as before;
And in the rough sport of your northern war
You will forget these dreadful fantasies.
Ethw. Ay, thou speak'st wisely now: methinks I still
In the embattled field, 'midst circling hosts,
Could do the high deeds of a warlike king;
And what a glorious field now opens to me!
But oh this cursed bar! this ill-timed sickness;
It keeps me back ev'n like a bitted steed.
But it was ever thus! What have avail'd
My crimes, and cares, and blood, and iron toil?
Qu. What have avail'd? art thou not king of Mercia?
Ethw. Ay, ay, Elburga! 'tis enough for thee
To tower in senseless state, and be a queen;
But th' expanded and aspiring soul,
To be but still the thing it long has been,
Is misery, e'en tho' enthron'd it were
Under the scope of high imperial state.
O, cursed hindrance! blasting fiends breathe on me.
Putt'st thou not something in thy damned drugs
That doth retard my cure? I might ere this
With cased limbs have strode the clanging field,
And been myself again.—Hark! some one comes. *(listening with alarm.)*
Qu. Be not disturb'd, it is your faithful groom,
Who brings the watch-dog; all things are secure.
Ethw. Nay, but I heard the sound of other feet.
(running to the door, and pushing in a great bar.)
Say, who art thou without?
Voice without. Your groom, my Lord, who brings your faithful dog.
Ethw. *(to* Queen.) Didst thou not hear the sound of other feet?
Qu. No, only his; your mind is too suspicious.
Ethw. I in his countenance have mark'd of late
That which I like not: were this dreary night
But once o'ermaster'd, he shall watch no more.
(opens the door suspiciously, and enters an armed man, leading in a great watch-dog: the door is shut again hastily, and the bar is replaced.)
(to the dog.) Come, rough and surly friend!
Thou only dost remain on whom my mind
Can surely trust. I'll have more dogs so train'd.
(looking steadfastly at the Groom.)
Thy face is pale; thou hast a haggard look:
Where hast thou been? *(seizing him by the neck.)*
Answer me quickly! Say, where hast thou been?
Gr. Looking upon the broad and fearful sky.
Qu. What sayst thou?
Gr. The heavens are all a flaming o'er our heads,
And fiery spears are shiv'ring thro' the air.
Ethw. Hast thou seen this?
Gr. Ay, but our holy saint!
Qu. It is some prodigy, dark and portentous.
Gr. A red and bloody mantle seems outstretch'd
O'er the wide welkin, and——
Ethw. Peace, damned fool!
Tell me no more: be to thy post withdrawn.
[*Exit* Groom *by a small side-door, leading the dog with him.*
Ethw. *(to himself, after musing for some time.)*
Heaven warring o'er my head! there is in this
Some fearful thing betoken'd.
If that, in truth, the awful term is come,
The fearful bound'ry of my mortal reach,
O'er which I must into those regions pass
Of horrour and despair, to take my place
With those who do their blood-earn'd crowns exchange
For ruddy circles of devouring fire;
Where hopeless woe and gnashing agony
Writhe in the dens of torment: where things be,
Yet never imaged in the thoughts of man,
Dark, horrible, unknown——
I'll mantle o'er my head, and think no more.
(covers his head with his cloak, and sinks down upon the couch.)
Qu. Nay, rather stretch you on the fleecy bed
Ethw. Rest, if thou canst; I do not hinder thee.
Qu. Then truly I will lean my head a while.
I am o'erspent and weary. *(leans on the couch.)*
Ethw. *(hastily uncovering his face.)*
Thou must not sleep: watch with me and be silent:
It is an awful hour! *(a long pause, then* Ethwald *starting up from the couch with alarm.)*
I hear strange sounds ascend the winding stairs.
Qu. I hear them too.
Ethw. Ha! dost thou also hear it?
Then it is real. *(listening.)* I hear the clash of arms.
Ho, guard! come forth.

RE-ENTER GROOM.

Go rouse my faithful dog;
Dark treason is upon us.
Gr. *(disappears, and then re-entering.)*
He sleeps so sound, my Lord, I cannot rouse him.
Ethw. Then, villain, I'm betray'd! thou hast betray'd me!
But set thy brawny strength against that door,

And bar them out: if thou but seem'st to flinch,
This sword is in thy heart.

A noise of armed men is now heard at the door, endeavouring to break it open, whilst ETHWALD *and the* GROOM *set their shoulders to it to prevent them. Enter* DWINA *hastily from an inner apartment, and with the* QUEEN *assists in putting their strength also to the door as the force without increases. The door is at last broken open, and* HEREULF, *with the* REBEL CHIEFS, *burst in, sword in hand.*

Her. (*to* Ethwald.)
Now, thou fell ruthless lion, that hast made
With bloody rage thy native forest waste!
The spearmen are upon thee! to the strife
Turn thy rough breast: thou canst no more escape.

Ethw. Quick to thy villain's work, thou wordy coward,
Who in the sick man's chamber seek'st the fame
Thou dar'st not in th' embattled field attain!
I am prepar'd to front thee and thy mates,
Were ye twice number'd o'er. (*sets his back to a pillar, and puts himself into a posture of defence.*)

Her. The sick man's chamber! dar'st thou, indeed,
Begrimed as thou art with blood and crimes
'Gainst man committed, human rights assume?
Thou art a hideous and envenom'd snake,
Whose wounded length, even in his noisome hole,
Men fiercely hunt, for love of human kind;
And, wert thou scotch'd to the last ring of life,
E'en that poor remnant of thy curs'd existence
Should be trod out i' th' dust.

Ethw. Come on, thou boasting fool! give thy sword work,
And spare thy cursed tongue.

Her. Ay, surely will I!
It is the sword of noble Ethelbert;
Its master's blood weighs down its heavy strokes;
His unseen hand directs them.
(*they fight:* Ethwald *defends himself furiously, but at last falls, and the conspirators raise a loud shout.*)

First Ch. Bless heaven, the work is done!

Sec. Ch. Now Mercia is revenged, and free-born men
May rest their toil'd limbs in their peaceful homes.

Third Ch. (*going nearer the body.*)
Ha! does he groan?

Sec. Ch. No, he dies sullenly, and to the wall
Turns his writh'd form and death-distorted visage.
(*a solemn pause, whilst* Ethwald, *after some convulsive motions, expires.*)

Her. Now hath his loaded soul gone to its place,
And ne'er a pitying voice from all his kind
Cries, " God have mercy on him!"

Third Ch. I've vow'd to dip my weapon in his blood.

First Ch. And so have I. (*several of them advancing with their swords towards the body, a* Young Man *steps forth, and stretches out his arm to keep them off.*)

Young Man. My father in the British wars was seiz'd
A British pris'ner, and with all he had
Unto a Mercian chief by lot consign'd:
Mine aged grandsire, lowly at his feet,
Rent his gray hair: Ethwald, a youthful warriour,
Receiv'd the old man's pray'r, and set him free;
Yea, even to the last heifer of his herds
Restor'd his wealth.
For this good deed, do not insult the fallen!
He was not ruthless once.
(*They all draw back, and retire from the body.* The Queen, *who has, during the fight, &c. remained at a distance, agitated with terrour and suspense, now comes forward to* Hereulf *with the air of one who supplicates for mercy, and* Dwina, *following close behind her, falls upon her knees, as if to beseech him in favour of her mistress.*)

Qu. If thou of good king Oswal, thine old master,
Aught of rememb'rance hast,———

Her. I do remember;
And deeply grieve to think a child of his
Has so belied her mild and gentle stock.
Nothing hast thou to fear: in some safe place,
In holy privacy, may'st thou repent
The evil thou hast done: for know, proud dame,
Thou art beneath our vengeance.
But as for thine advisers, that dark villain,
The artful Alwy, and that impious man
Who does dishonour to his sacred garb,
Their crimes have earned for them a bitter meed,
And they shall have it.

Sec. Ch. Shall we not now the slumb'ring Mercians rouse,
And tell our countrymen that they are free
From the oppressor's yoke?

Her. Yes, thou say'st well: thro' all the vexed land
Let ev'ry heart bound at the joyful tidings!
Thus from his frowning height the tyrant falls,
Like a dark mountain, whose interior fires,
Raging in ceaseless tumult, have devour'd
Its own foundations. Sunk in sudden ruin
To the tremendous gulph, in the vast void
No friendly rock rears its opposing head
To stay the dreadful crash.
The joyful hinds, with grave and chasten'd joy,
Point to the traveller the hollow vale
Where once it stood, and the now-sunned cots,
Where, near its base, they and their little ones
Dwelt trembling in its deep and fearful shade.

[EXEUNT.

THE SECOND MARRIAGE:

A COMEDY.

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

MEN:

SEABRIGHT.
BEAUMONT, *a worthy clergyman, who is his friend and brother-in-law.*
LORD ALLCREST.
SIR CRAFTY SUPPLECOAT.
PLAUSIBLE, *a schemer.*
PROWLER, *his knavish follower.*
WILLIAM BEAUMONT, *son to* Beaumont.
MORGAN, *uncle to* Seabright's *first wife.*
ROBERT.
Gardner, Sharp, and Servants, &c.

WOMEN:

LADY SARAH, *sister to* Lord Allcrest.
SOPHIA *daughter to* Seabright.
MRS. BEAUMONT.
PRY, Lady Sarah's *woman.*
Landlady, Servants, &c.

Scene: Seabright's *house in the country, not far from London, and a small country Inn near it.*

ACT I.

SCENE I.—A GARDEN: THE GARDENER DISCOVERED AT WORK AMONGST SOME SHRUBS AND FLOWERS.

Enter ROBERT hastily, calling to him as he enters.

Rob. Stop, stop, Gardener! What are you about there? My mistress's rose-trees rooted out of her favourite nook thus? Get out of this spot with your cursed wheel-barrow! If there were one spark of a christian in your heart, you would pluck the last hair off your bare scalp rather than root out these shrubs.

Gar. Softly and civilly, Master Robert; and answer me one question first.—If I intend to remain gardener in this family, and make my pot boil and my family thrive as I have done, whether will it be wiser in me, do you think, to obey your orders or my master's?

Rob. And did he order you to do this?

Gar. As sure as I hold this spade in my hand.

Rob. I should as soon have thought of tearing the turf from my mother's grave as of doing this thing. Well, well; perhaps he has forgot that she liked them.

Gar. Now I rather think he remember'd, when he gave me the orders, that another lady likes them not; and a dead woman's fancy match'd against a living woman's freak, with a middle-aged widower, hear ye me, who has just pull'd the black coat off his back, has but a sorry chance, Robert.

Rob. Ay, and he has pull'd the black coat too soon off his back. But away with it!—I'll think no more of what you say—it is impossible.

Gar. May I never handle a spade again, if she did not squint to this direct spot, with her horrid-looking grey eyes, the last time she walked thro' the garden, saying it was a mass of confusion that ought to be clear'd away, and he gave me the orders for doing it the very next morning.

Rob. Who could have believed this? who could have believed this but a few months ago, when she rambled thro' these walks, with all her white-frock'd train gamboling round her?

Gar. Nay, good Robert, don't be so down o' the mouth about it: the loss of his wife, and an unlook'd-for legacy of twenty thousand pounds, may set a man's brains a working upon new plans. There is nothing very wonderful in that, man. He'll get his lady-wife and the borough together, with a power of high relations, you know, and we shall all be fine folks by and by.—Thou wilt become master-butler or gentleman-valet, or something of that kind, and I shall be head gardener, to be sure, with a man or two to obey my orders: we shan't be the same pains-taking folks that we have been, I warrant you, when he is a parliament man.

Rob. Thou'rt always looking after something for thine own advantage, and that puts all those foolish notions into thy noddle. No, no; he has lived too sweetly in his own quiet home, amongst the rustling of his own trees and the prattling of his own infants, to go now into the midst of all that shuffling and changing and making of speeches. He'll never become a parliament man.

Gar. Well, then, let him marry Lady Sarah for love, if he please; I'll neither make nor meddle in the matter. If she keep a good house, and give good victuals and drink to the people in it, I'll never trouble my head about it.

Rob. Out upon thee, man, with thy victuals and thy drink! Thou'rt worser than a hog. Well should I like, if it were not for the sake of better folks than thyself, to see thy greedy chaps exercised upon her feeding.

Gar. What, is she niggardly then, and so fine a lady too?

Rob. Niggardly! she'll pull off her wide hoop, and all them there flounces that people go to court in, to search over the house for the value of a candle's end, rather than any of the poor devils belonging to her should wrong her of a doit's worth. Thou'lt have rare feeding, truly, when she comes amongst us.

Gar. Heaven forbid it, then! No wonder thou'rt anxious she should not come here. I always wonder'd what made thee so concern'd about it.

Rob. And dost thou think, swine that thou art, I am concern'd for it upon this account? Thou deservest to be fed on husks and garbage all thy life for having such a thought. I, who was the friend, I may say the relation, of my good mistress (for thou knowest I am her foster brother; and when I look upon her poor children playing about, I feel as tho' they were my own flesh and blood. It is not that I boast of the connection: God knows I am as humble as any body!

Gar. Ay, no doubt; and a rare good thing it is, this same humility. I know a poor ass, grazing on the common, not far off, that, to my certain knowledge, is foster brother to a very great lord, and yet, I must say that for him, I never saw him prick up his ears or even shake his tail one bit the more for it in my life. By my certies! he must be a very meek and sober-minded ass!

(*singing and gathering up his tools, &c.*)

Take this in your hand for me, man; I'm going to another part of the garden. (*holding out something for* Robert *to carry.*)

Rob. (*pushing away his hand angrily.*) Take care of it yourself, fool: you would sing tho' your father were upon the gallows.

Gar. I crave your worship's pardon! I should have whined a little, to be sure, to have been better company to you. (*looking off the stage.*) But here comes a good man who frowns upon nobody; the worthy rector fo Easterdown: I'll go and bid him welcome, for he likes to see a poor fellow hold up his head before him, and speak to him like a man.

Rob. You bid him welcome, indeed! stand out of the way: I'll bid him welcome myself. He is as good as my own——No matter what. He is married to my good mistress's sister; ay, and his own father christen'd me too. I'm glad he is come. You go to him indeed!

Enter Mr. Beaumont.

O Sir! you're welcome to this sad place.

Bea. I thank you, honest Robert; how do you do?

Rob. So, so; I'm obliged to you for the favour of asking. Woe is me, Sir! but this be a sad place since you came last among us.

Bea. A sad change, indeed, my good friend, and you seem to have felt it too. You look thin and alter'd, Robert.

Rob. I ha'n't been very merry of late, and that makes a body look——(*passing his hand across his eyes.*)

Bea. (*shaking his head.*) Ay, what must thy poor master be, then, since it is even so with thee? Poor man, it griev'd me to think that I could not be with him on the first shock of his distress; but illness and business of importance made it impossible for me to leave Yorkshire. How does he do? I hope you look cheerfully before him, and do all that you can to comfort him.

Rob. Indeed I should have been very glad, in my homely way, to have done what I could to comfort him; but, I don't know how it is, he gets on main well without, sir.

Bea. (*surprised.*) Does he?—I'm very glad to hear it. I love him for that, now: it is a noble exertion in him; he has a great merit in it, truly.

Rob. Humph, humph. (*a pause.*)

Bea. What were you going to say, my good Robert?

Rob. Nothing, Sir; I was only clearing my throat.

Bea. How does he sleep, Robert?

Rob. I can't say, Sir, not being present when he's a-bed, you know.

Bea. How does he eat, then? little rest and little food must, I fear, have brought him very low.

Rob. Nay, as for the matter of his eating, I can't say but I find as good a notch made in the leg of mutton, when he dines alone, as there used to be.

Bea. Well, that's good. But I fear he is too much alone.

Rob. No, Sir; he has dined out a pretty deal of late. He does, indeed, walk up and down the shady walk by the orchard, and talk to himself, often enough.

Bea. (*alarmed.*) Does he? that is a sign of the deepest sorrow: I must speak to him; I must put books into his hands.

Rob. O, Sir, there's no need of that; he has a book in his hand often enough.

Bea. And what kind of books does he read?

Rob. Nay, it is always the same one.

Bea. Well, he can't do better: there is but one book in the world that can't be too often in a man's hand.

Rob. Very true; Sir, but it is not that one tho'.—I thought as you do myself, and so I slyly look'd over his shoulder one morning to be sure of it; but I saw nothing in it but all about the great people at court, and the great offices they hold.

Bea. You astonish me, Robert. His heavy loss I fear has bewildered his wits. Poor man! poor man! and all the sweet children too!

Rob. Yes, Sir, they—will feel—

Bea. What would you say, my friend?

Rob. Nothing, Sir. This vile neckcloth takes me so tight round the throat, an' a plague to it!

Gar. (*coming forward with a broad grin.*) God bless you, Sir! I be glad to see you here. How does your good lady and master William do? He is grown a fine young gentleman now, I warrant: he, he, he, he, he!

Rob. (*to* Gar. *angrily.*) Can't you ask a

gentleman how he does, fool, without putting that damned grin upon your face?

Bea. Why, my friend Robert, what words are these you make use of?

Rob. True, Sir, I should not have used them: but when a body is vexed he'll be angry, and when a body is angry, good sooth! he'll e'en bolt out with the first word that comes to him, though he were a saint.

Bea. Too true, Robert; but long before a body becomes a saint, he is very seldom vexed, and still seldomer angry at any thing.

Rob. God bless you, Sir! I know very well I a'n't so good as I should be, and I wish from my heart I was better.

Bea. Give me your hand, honest Robert; you will soon be better if you wish to be so, and it is a very pleasant progress when once it is fairly begun. (*Looking off the stage.*) I think I see your master at a distance. Good day to you! good day to you, Gardener!

[Exeunt *severally.*

Scene II.—A parlour, with a door opening into the garden. Seabright and Beaumont are seen walking together in the garden. Bea. talking to Sea. as they enter.

Bea. (*continuing to talk.*) I must indeed confess, my dear friend, you had every thing that this world can bestow; a moderate fortune, with health to enjoy it; the decent, modest tranquillity, of private life, and the blessings of domestic harmony. I must, indeed, confess you were a happy man. (*pauses and looks at* Sea. *who says nothing.*) Your measure of good things was complete; it was impossible to add to it; there was no more for you to desire on this side of heaven. (*pauses again.*)

Sea. (*answering very tardily.*) I had, indeed, many of the comforts of life.

Bea. Many of the comforts of life! you had every thing the heart of man can desire; and, pardon me, you could afford to lose part of your felicity, dear as that part might be, and still retain enough to make life worth the cherishing. To watch over your rising family; to mark the hopeful progress of their minds; to foster every good disposition and discourage every bad one found there: this, my friend, is a noble, an invigorating task, most worthy of a man.

Sea. It is certainly the duty of every man to attend to the education of his children: their fortunes in the world depend upon it.

Bea. (*looking displeased at him.*) Poo! their fortunes in that world from which this will appear but like a nest of worms, a hole for grubs and chrysalises, that world which is our high and native home, depend upon it. (*walking up and down disturbed, and then returning to* Sea. *with a self-upbraiding look.*)

Forgive me, Seabright; you know I am sometimes thus, but my spark is soon extinguished. I am glad—I ought to be glad to see you so composed. It is a noble conquest you have gained over your feelings, and what must it not have cost you! Give me your hand, and be not thus constrained with me: I know the weakness of human nature, and dearly do I sympathize with you.

Sea. You are very kind, my friend; but you have travelled far; you must want refreshment; let me order something. (*going to the door and calling a* Servant, *to whom he gives orders.*)

Bea. (*aside.*) Well, there is something here I don't understand. But I am wrong, perhaps: some people can't bear to have the subject of their sorrow touched upon: I'll talk to him of other things.—(*Aloud to* Sea. *as he returns from the door.*) Your old acquaintance, Asby of Gloucestershire, called upon me a day or two before I left home, and inquired kindly after you. He is a very rich man now; he has purchased the great estate of Carriswood, near his native place, and is high sheriff of the county.

Sea. (*becoming suddenly animated.*) What, Asby? my old school-fellow Asby? that is a great rise, by my soul! The estate of Carriswood, and high sheriff of the county! What interest has pushed him? what connexions has he made? has he speculated with his money? how has he advanced himself?

Bea. I can't very well tell you: he has gone on, like many others, turning, and scraping, and begging; and managing great people's matters for them, till he has become one of the most considerable men in that part of the country.

Sea. He must be a clever fellow. We used to think him stupid at school, but we have been dev'lishly deceived.

Bea. No, you have not, for he is stupid still. His brother, the poor curate of Crofton, is a clever man.

Sea. (*contemptuously.*) The poor curate of Crofton! One of those clever men, I suppose, who sit with their shoes down o' the heel, by their own study fire, brooding o'er their own hoard of ideas, without ever being able from their parts or their learning to produce one atom's worth of good to themselves or their families. I have known many such: but let me see a man, who, from narrow and unfavorable beginnings, shapes out his own way in this changing world to wealth and distinction, and, by my faith! he will be wise enough for me.

Bea. My friend, you become animated; I am happy to see you so much interested in the fortune of others! it is a blessed disposition. I have something also to tell you of your old friend Malton, which I am sure will give you pleasure.

Sea. What, he has got a fortune too, I suppose, and is standing for the county.

Bea. No; something better than that, my friend.

Sea. Ha! Well, some people get on amazingly.

Bea. It is amazing, indeed, for it was altogether hopeless. You remember his only son, the poor little boy that was so lame and so sickly?

Sea. Yes, I do.

Bea. Well, from some application, which I cannot remember at present, the sinews of his leg have recovered their proper tone again, and he is growing up as healthy a comely looking lad as you can see.

Sea. O, that is what you meant—I am glad to hear it, certainly; a cripple in a family is not easily provided for. But pray now, let me understand this matter more perfectly.

Bea. I tell you I have forgot how they treated the leg, but———

Sea. (*impatiently.*) No, no, no! What relations, what connexions had Asby to push him? A man can't get on without some assistance: his family, I always understood, was low and distress'd.

Bea. He had two or three ways of getting on, which I would not advise any friend of mine to follow him in; and the worst of them all was making what is called a convenient marriage.

Sea. (*affecting to laugh.*) Ha, ha, ha! you are severe, Beaumont: many a respectable man has suffered interest to determine even his choice of a wife. Riches and honours must have their price paid for them.

Bea. Trash and dirt! I would not have a disagreeable vixen to tyrannise over my family for the honors of a peerage.

Sea. Well, well! people think differently upon most subjects.

Bea. They do indeed; and it is not every one who thinks so delicately, and has so much reason to do so, upon this subject, as we have, my dear Seabright. Our wives—

Sea. (*interrupting him.*) And he comes in for the county, you say?

Bea. No, no, Seabright! you mistake me: high sheriff of the county, I said. How you do interest yourself in the fortunes of this man!

Sea. And what should surprise you in this? By Heaven, there is nothing so interesting to me as to trace the course of a prosperous man through this varied world! First he is seen like a little stream, wearing its shallow bed through the grass; circling and winding, and gleaning up its treasures from every twinkling rill as it passes: farther on, the brown sand fences its margin, the dark rushes thicken on its side: farther on still, the broad flags shake their green ranks, the willows bend their wide boughs o'er its course: and yonder, at last, the fair river appears, spreading its bright waves to the light!

Bea. (*staring strangely on him, then turning away some paces, and shaking his head ruefully.*) Poor man! poor man! his intellects are deranged: he is not in his senses.

Enter a SERVANT.

Sea. (*to* Ser.) Very well. (*to* Bea.) Let us go to the breakfast room, Beaumont, and you'll find something prepared for you. (*As they are about to go out, the children appear at a distance in the garden.*)

Bea. (*looking out.*) Ha! yonder are the children! Blessings on them! I must run and speak to them first. [EXIT *into the garden to the children.*

Sea. (*to himself, looking contemptuously after* Bea.) Ay, go to the children! thou art only fit company for them! To come here with his comfort and condolence full eight months and a half after her death—he is a mere simpleton! His wonderful delicacy too about interested marriages—he is worse than a simpleton! And my only business now, forsooth, must be to stay at home and become schoolmaster to my own children!—he is an absolute fool. (*turning round and seeing the Servant still standing at the door.*) Have you inquired at the village which of the inns my Lord Lubberford stops at on his way to town?

Ser. Yes, Sir; but they don't know.

Sea. But they must know. Go, and make farther inquiries, for I must pay my respects to his Lordship as he passes. Were the fruit and the flowers carried to Lady Sarah this morning?

Ser. I don't know, Sir.

Sea. Run to the gardener, and put him in mind of it. [EXEUNT.

SCENE III.—A LIBRARY.

Enter SEABRIGHT, who walks several times slowly across the stage as if deeply engaged in his own mind; then stops short with a considerable pause.

Sea. I am now upon the threshold of distinction, and with one step more I cross it. On this side lies spiritless obscurity; on that, invigorating honor. (*pauses.*) Member of Parliament! there is magic in the words, and of most powerful operation.—Let that man find a place elsewhere; why should I squeeze myself and every body round me to make room for him? Sir, he's a Member of Parliament.—Let that fool hold his tongue there; why do we silently listen to all his prosing stuff? Sir, he's a Member of Parliament.—What; bells ringing, children huzzaing, corporation men sweating at this rate, to welcome that poor lurking creature to your town? To be sure; he's a Member of Parliament.—Ay, so it is! I too have mixed with the ignoble crowd to stare upon men thus honoured. I have only now to over step the bounds, and be myself the very thing I gazed at. (*pausing again.*)—There is indeed a toll, a price of entrance that must be paid, and my heart stands back from it; but there is no other way than this, and what I would wear I must purchase.

O, it is well worth its price! To be but known and named as filling such a place in society brings pleasure with it. And in the eyes of our early friends too,—Methinks I can see at this moment every curious face in my native village gathering about the letter-boy, as he sets out upon his rounds, to look with grinning admiration upon my first franks. "Free, Seabright;" ha, ha, ha! *(laughing to himself, and rubbing his hands together with great complacency.)*

Enter ROBERT.

Sea. *(turning round shortly, like one who is caught.)* What brings you here, sirrah?

Rob. You desired me to tell you, Sir, when Miss Seabright returned from her walk.

Sea. *(with his countenance changed.)* And is she so soon returned?

Rob. Yes, Sir; and I have told her you wish to speak with her.

Sea. You have told her—I wish—I looked not for her so soon—I wish you had not—

Rob. Sir!

Sea. Begone! begone! and say I am waiting for her. *(Exit* Rob. *stealing a look of observation at his master as he goes out.)*—Ah! here comes the hard pull! here comes the sticking place! I should have prepared her for this before, but my heart would not suffer me. O that I had employed some one else to tell her! She little thinks of this! I hear her coming *(listening, while children's voices are heard without.)* What! she is bringing the children with her! I hear the little one prating as she goes. O God! I cannot—I cannot!

[EXIT, *running out with much agitation.*

Enter SOPHIA, carrying a little boy on her back, and an elder boy and girl taking hold of her gown.

Soph. *(to the* little one.) You have had a fine ride and a long ride, have you not?

Little One. Yesh, tit.

Soph. Come down then, boy, for your horse is tired.

Little One. No, tit.

Soph. No, tit! but you must tho.' *(setting him down.)* Stand upon your fat legs there, and tell me what I'm to have for all this trouble of carrying you. What am I to have, urchin?

Little One. Kish.

Soph. *(after kissing him affectionately)* And what am I to have for these comfits I have saved for you?

Little One. Kish.

Soph. *(kissing him again.)* And what am I to have for the little dog I bought for you this morning?

Little One. Kish.

Soph. What! kish again? Kish for every thing? *(kissing him very tenderly.)* O you little rogue! you might buy the whole world for such money as this, if every body loved you as I do. Now, children, papa is not ready to see us yet, I find, so in the mean time, I'll divide the little cake I promised you. *(taking a little cake from her work-bag, and dividing it; whilst* Robert, *peeping in at the door and seeing* Seabright *not there, ventures in, and stands for a little while looking tenderly upon* Soph. *and the children.)*

Rob. God bless all your sweet faces!

Soph. What do you want here, good Robert?

Rob. Nothing—nothing.—God bless you all, my pretty ones! *(listening.)* I hear him coming [EXIT, *looking piteously upon them, as he goes off.*

Soph. I hear papa coming.

Little Girl. I'll run and meet him.

Eldest Boy. Don't, Emma; he does not like to play with us now; it is troublesome to him.

Little Girl. When mama was alive he play'd with us.

Soph. Hush! my good girl.

Enter SEABRIGHT.

We have been waiting for you, papa; Robert told us you wanted to see us all together.

Sea. Did Robert tell you so? I wanted to see you alone, Sophia; but since it is so, the others may remain. I have got something to say to you.

Soph. You look very grave, my dear Sir: have I offended you?

Eldest Boy. It was I who broke the china vase, so don't be angry with her for that.

Sea. My brave boy, it is distress, and not anger, that makes me grave.

Soph. And are you distress'd, papa? O don't be distress'd! we will do every thing we can to please you. I know very well we can't make you so happy as when mama was alive; but we'll be such good children! we'll obey you, and serve you, and love you so much, if you will but play with us, and look upon us again as you used to do.

Sea. *(softened.)* My dear girl, I wish I could make you all happy: I wish to raise your situation in the world above the pitch of my present confined abilities: I wish—*(stops and is much embarrassed.)*

Soph. *(kissing his hand.)* My dear, dear father! you say that I am your dear girl, and I promise you, you shall find me a good one. I want no better fortune in the world, than to live with you, and be useful to you. I can overlook the household matters, and order every thing in the family as you would like to have it. I want no better fortune than this: I shall be a happy girl and a proud girl, too, if you will put confidence in me.

Sea. *(taking her hand tenderly.)* My sweet child! this would be a dull and sombre life for a young girl like you: you ought now to be dressed and fashioned like other young people, and have the advantage of being introduced to the world by those who———

Soph. O no! I don't care whether my gown be made of silk or of linen: and as for being

dull, never trouble your head about that; we shall find a way to get the better of it. Do you know, papa,——but I am almost ashamed to tell it you.—

Sea. What is it, my dear?

Soph. I have been learning to play at backgammon: for you know mama and you used to play at it of a winter evening; and I'll play with you, if you'll allow me.

Sea. O God! O God! this is too much! (*Turns from them in great agitation, and running to the opposite side of the room, stands leaning his back against the wall, whilst* Sophia *and the children gather round him.*)

Soph. My dear father! what is the matter?

Eldest Boy. Are you not well, papa?

Sea. I am well enough! I am well enough! but I have something to tell you, and I cannot tell it.

Soph. For God's sake let me know what it is.

Sea. You must know it: it is necessary that you should. I am—— (*pauses.*)

Soph. A bankrupt.

Sea. No, no, no! I am going to be married.—(Sophia *staggers some paces back, and stands like one perfectly stupified.*) What is the matter, Sophia? are you going to faint?

Soph. No, I shan't faint.

Sea. Be not so overcome with it, my dear child! it is for the good of my children I marry. (*pauses and looks at her, but she is silent.*) You, and all children in your situation, look upon these matters with a prejudiced eye. It is my great regard for you that determines me to take this step (*pauses, but she is silent.*) Do you hear me? Will you not speak to me?

Soph. O my poor mother! little did I think when I kiss'd your cold hands, that you would so soon be forgotten!

Sea. No more of this, my dear! No more of this! It is improper; it is painful to me. I have not forgotten—I love—I respect—I adore her memory: but I am engaged—it is necessary—your interest is concerned in it, my dear children; and I know, my good Sophia, you will not add to your father's distress by stubborn and undutiful behaviour.

Soph. O no, my dear Sir! if you love and adore her memory I am satisfied. Yet, if you do, how can you—Oh how can you!—I will say no more: God bless you, and give you a good wife! (*weeping.*) But she will never be so good as my mother; she will never love you as my mother did.

Sea. Forbear, my good girl! I know it very well: and I don't marry now to be beloved. But Lady Sarah is a very good woman, and will make me as happy as I can expect to be; she is sister to Lord Allcrest, you know, and is related to the first people of the country.

Soph. Good heaven, Sir! you can't mean to marry Lady Sarah: all the world knows how ill-temper'd she is.

Eldest Boy. What that lady with the cunning-looking nose, and the strange staring eye-brows? If she come into this house I'll cast my top at her.

Soph. Hold your tongue, George! papa is not so hard-hearted as to set such a woman over us. Come, come, children! gather round, and hold up your little hands to him: he will have pity upon you. (*the children gather round, and* Sophia, *putting the hands of the youngest child together, and holding them up, kneels down before him.*) O Sir! have pity on them! We have nobody to plead for us, and I cannot speak.

Enter Robert with his face all blubbered, and throwing himself upon his knees by the children, holds up his hands most piteously.

Rob. O, Sir!

Sea. (*bursting into a violent rage.*) What, sirrah! have you been listening at the door? Go from my presence this moment!

Soph. Dear Sir! be not angry with him!

Sea. (*putting her away.*) No, no! let us have no more of this nonsense: I have listen'd too long to it already. (*breaks from them and* Exit.)

Rob. I wish my head had been cut off before I had come in with my ill-timed assistance! Curse upon my stupid pate! I deserve to be hang'd for it. (*beating his head and grasping his hair.*) O my pretty ones! I sent you to him that you might work on his heart, for I knew what he wanted to say well enough, and yet I must needs thrust in my silly snout amongst you, to mar all! For a man that can read books and cast accounts, and all that, to do such a trick! I deserve to be cudgel'd!

Soph. Don't be so angry at yourself, Robert: you meant it well, and you have always been so good to us!

Rob. Good to you! I love you like my own flesh and blood, every one of you; and if any body dare to do you wrong, I'll——no matter what (*clenching his fist and nodding significantly.*) He may turn me off if he please; but I'll not quit the neighbourhood: I'll watch over you, my pretty ones; and hang me if any one shall hurt a hair of your heads!

Soph. I thank you, Robert: but don't tell any body: that would not be right, you know. Come, children; you shall go with me to my own room.

[Exeunt Sophia *and children by one side, and* Exit Robert *by the other, looking after them with tenderness and pity.*)

ACT II.

Scene I.—before the front of seabright's house.

Enter Plausible and Prowler.

Plau. Do you wait for me in that farther walk yonder, till I come from visiting my subject.

Pro. Well, God grant he prove a good subject! we are woundily in want of one at present.

Plau. Don't lose courage, man; there is always a certain quantity of good and of bad luck put into every man's lot, and the more of the one that has past over his head, the more he may expect of the other. Seabright has a fortune to speculate with, and some turn, as I have been told, for speculation: he is just launching into a new course of life, and I have a strong presentiment that I shall succeed with him.

Pro. Now away with your presentiments! for we have never yet had any good luck that has not come pop upon our heads like a snow-ball, from the very opposite point to our expectation: but he has got an unexpected legacy lately; and I have observed that a sum coming in this way, to a man of a certain disposition, very often plays the part of a decoy-bird to draw away from him all the rest of his money; there I rest my hopes.

Plau. Why you talk as if I were going to ruin him, instead of increasing his fortune by my advice.

Pro. I have seen ruin follow every man that has been favour'd with your advice, as constantly as the hind legs follow the fore legs of a horse, and therefore I cannot help thinking there must be some connexion between them. However, I don't pretend to reason, Plausible: it might only be some part of their bad luck that happen'd just at those times to be passing over their heads; and they have always, in the mean time, supplied you and your humble follower with money for our immediate wants.

Plau. Well, hold your tongue, do! (*knocks at the door, which is opened by* Robert.) Is your master at home?

Rob. Yes.

Plau. Can he be spoken with?

Rob. No, Sir, he can't see you at present.

Plau. At what hour can I see him?

Rob. I don't know, Sir.

Plau. Is he so much engaged? But you seem sad, my friend: has any thing happened? You had a funeral in the house some time ago?

Rob. Yes, Sir; but it is a wedding we have got in it at this bout.

Plau. I had the honour of calling on Mr. Seabright yesterday morning, but he was not at home.

Rob. Yes, Sir; he has been at the borough of Crockdale to be chair'd, and the parish of Upperton to be married; and he returned last night—

Pro. Bridegroom and Member of Parliament!

Rob. Keep your jokes till they are ask'd for.

Pro. They would be stale jokes indeed, then.

Plau. (*to* Pro.) Hold your tongue, pray. (*to* Rob.) He is engaged?

Rob. Yes, Sir; he is with the bride and the company, in the garden, at breakfast.

Plau. Well, I shan't disturb him at present.—Here is a crown for you: you will recollect my face again when you see it? I'll call again very soon.

Pro. (*aside.*) Mercy upon us! the last crown we have in the world given away on such a chance! It shan't go tho'.

Rob. O yes, Sir, I'll recollect you. [Exit Plausible.

Pro. (*lingering behind.*) Don't shut the door yet. Hark you, my good Mr. John, for I know your name very well!

Rob. My name is Robert.

Pro. Yes, Robert I said.

Rob. Did you so, truly? have not I ears in my head?

Pro. Assuredly, Sir, and ears, let me tell you, that will hear good news soon, if you will be counsell'd by me.

Rob. Anan?

Pro. Have you never a mind to put out a little money to advantage? a guinea or so, now, in such a way as to return to you again with fifteen or twenty of his yellow-coated brethren at his back?

Rob. Poo! with your nonsense! I have sent two or three guineas out upon such fool's errands already.

Pro. And did they come back empty-handed to you?

Rob. No by my faith; for they never came back at all.

Pro. O lud, lud! there be such cheats in this world, they frighten honest folks from trying their fortune. I have got a crown of my own, just now, and with another crown put to it by any good-hearted fellow that would go halves with me in the profit, I have an opportunity of making a good round sum, at present, in a very honest way, that would almost make a man of me at once: but I'm sure I don't advise you to do it; for prudence is a great virtue; prudence is a very great virtue.

(*Bell rings, and* Robert *stands hesitating.*)

Rob. Hang it! a crown is no great matter after all. There it is (*giving him the crown whilst the bell rings again.*) How that plaguy bell rings! When you get the money for me, you'll know where to call?

Pro. Never fear! when I get the money for you, I'll find my way back again, I warrant you. [Exeunt.

Scene II.—A GARDEN, WITH A TEMPLE SEEN AT SOME DISTANCE, IN WHICH ARE DISCOVERED LADY SARAH, SOPHIA, MR. AND MRS. BEAUMONT, AND WILLIAM BEAUMONT, AS IF SEATED AFTER BREAKFAST; WHILST GARDENER AND ONE OR TWO OF THE SERVANTS SKULK NEAR THE FRONT OF THE STAGE, BEHIND SOME BUSHES, LOOKING AT THEM.

Gar. Bride indeed! she's as unlovely a looking piece of goods as ever I look'd upon. See how she stares at every thing about her, and curls up her nose like a girkin! I'll warrant you she'll be all thro' my kitchen grounds by-and-by, to count over my cabbages.

First Ser. Hold your tongue, man: we're too long here: see, they are all breaking up now, and some of them will be here in a trice. [Exeunt Servants.

The company come out from the temple, and Mr. *and* Mrs. Beaumont *advance to the front of the stage, talking together earnestly.*

Bea. (*continuing to talk.*) Nay, my dear, you are prejudiced and severe; it did not strike me that she behaved to you with so much forbidding coldness. She has an ungracious countenance to be sure, but now and then when it relaxes, she looks as if she had some good in her.

Mrs. B. Yes, Charles, you find always some good in every one of God's creatures.

Bea. And there is some good in every one of God's creatures, if you would but look for it.

Mrs. B. I'm sure those who can find it out in her, have a quicker discernment than I can pretend to. How unlucky it was that we came to the house last night, without inquiring beforehand the state of the family; I thought I should have fainted when they told me of the marriage; and when I saw that creature in my sweet sister's place!

Bea. I pitied you, my dear Susan, very much, indeed I did; but it would have look'd pettish and unforgiving in us to have gone away again at that late hour; and I think we must stay with them till to-morrow. For the children's sake we must endeavour to be on good terms with them. But here come William and Sophia.

Enter William Beaumont and Sophia, talking as they enter.

Wil. You like the yellow-streak'd carnations best?

Soph. Yes, I think they are the prettiest, tho' we have but very few of them.

Wil. O then I'll make our gardener sow a whole bushel of carnation-seed when I get home, that we may have a good chance, at least, of raising some of the kind you admire. And what else can I do for you Sophy? Shall I copy some of my friend's verses for you? or send you some landscapes for your drawing book? or—did not you say you should like to have a rocking-horse for little Tony?

Soph. Indeed you are very good, cousin.

Wil. No, no! don't say that: there is no goodness at all in doing any thing for you.

Soph. (*going up to* Mr. B. *who puts her arm affectionately round her.*) My dear aunt!

Wil. Ah, mother! see how tall she has grown since we saw her last, and how dark her hair is now.

Mrs. B. (*archly.*) You like fair hair best, I believe, William.

Wil. I like fair hair! I can't endure it!

Mrs. B. (*smiling.*) Well, well, you need not be so vehement in expressing your dislike.

Bea. Here comes Lady Sarah to join us: this at least is civil, you will confess.

Lady S. (*coming forward to join them.*) You are fond, Ma'am, I perceive, of the shade, from preferring this side of the garden. (*formally to* Mrs. B. *who coldly bows assent.*) It is a very pleasant morning for travelling, Mr. Beaumont.

Bea. Yes, Madam, it is a very pleasant morning for travelling.

Lady S. I'm sorry, however, that you will have so much dust on your road to town.

Soph. (*to* Mrs. B.) Why you don't go to-day, aunt? I thought you were to stay longer.

Mrs. B. No, my dear, we go this morning. (*looking significantly to* Beaumont.)

Lady S. Would not the cool of the evening be more agreeable?

Mrs. B. No, Ma'am, the coolness of this morning has been quite enough to induce us to set out immediately.

Enter Servant.

Ser. (*to Lady* S.) Some poor people from the village are come to wish your Ladyship health and happiness.

Lady S. (*ungraciously.*) I am obliged to them.—What do they mean? Ay, ay! tell them I am obliged to them. You need not wait; that is all.

[Exit Ser. *whilst* Mrs. B. *smiles significantly to her husband.*

Soph. I wonder if my old friend, Huskins, be amongst them: I'll run and see. (*going to run out.*)

Lady S. Perhaps, Miss Seabright will do me the honour to consult me upon what friendships are proper for her to cultivate.

Mrs. B. (*seeing* Sophia *distressed.*) If your Ladyship will permit us, she shall retire with me for a little while. [Exeunt Mrs. B. *and* Sophia.

Wil. (*aside to his father, as they are about to follow them.*) What an ugly witch it is! must we leave Sophia with her? [Exeunt Beaumont *and* William B. *Lady* Sarah *looking after them suspiciously.*

Enter Seabright.

Lady S. (*turning to him with affected sprightliness.*) So you have been upon the watch, I suppose, and will not suffer me to stroll thro' these shady walks alone: I am positively to have no time to myself.

Sea. You don't call me an intruder, I hope?

Lady S. Indeed if you become very troublesome, I don't know what I may call you. He, he, he! *laughing foolishly*. Seabright *putting his hand up to the side of her hat, she pushes it away with pretended coyness*. How can you be so childish? he, he, he!

Sea. (*gravely.*) Won't you let me pick a caterpillar from your ribband?

Lady S. (*looking foolish and disappointed.*) O! is that it? I am much obliged to you: but you are always so good, so tenderly attentive to me! Indeed this little hand was well bestow'd upon you, Seabright: I wish it had convey'd to you a better gift when it gave away myself. (*thrusting out a great brown hand to him.*

Sea. (*raising it to his lips with affected tenderness.*) What could it possibly convey, my dear Lady Sarah, more—(*stopping short as he is about to kiss it.*) Is that a family ring upon your finger?

Lady S. Yes, it was my mother's: why so?

Sea. The arms of the Highcastles are upon it: Lord Highcastle then is your relation?

Lady S. I am nearly related to him.

Sea. (*with his countenance brightening.*) I did not know this: by my soul, I am glad of it! He is in credit with the minister: you are on good terms with him, I hope.

Lady S. Yes, I have always taken pains to be upon terms with him.

Sea. I dare say you have; I dare say you have: you have so much prudence, and so many good qualities, my dear love! (*kissing her hand with great alacrity.*)

Lady S. O it is all your blind partiality! (*putting her hand tenderly upon his shoulder.*) Do you know, my dear Mr. Seabright, that coat becomes you very much: I wish you would always wear that color.

Sea. I'll wear any thing you like, my dear. But, by-the-by, my constituents at Crockdale have a manufacture of woollen in the town: I must buy two or three hundred yards of their stuff from them, I believe, lest I should have occasion to be elected again.

Lady S. (*taking her hand eagerly off his shoulder.*) Two or three hundred yards of stuff from them! Why, the cheapest kind they make is eighteenpence-halfpenny a yard: only consider what that will come to.

Sea. No very great sum!

Lady S. I am surprised to hear you say so. Now I should think if you were to send the mayor and aldermen a haunch of venison now and then when it comes in your way, and the earliest information of any great public events that may occur, it would be a more delicate and pleasing attention.

Sea. Well, well, my dear Lady Sarah, don't let us fall out about it.

Lady S. I am perfectly good humored, I assure you; but you are so———

Sea. Yonder is your maid coming to speak to you: I'll leave you.

Lady S. Indeed she has nothing to say: I won't suffer her to break in upon our tender conversation.

Sea. But I must go to give directions about accommodating Lord Allcrest and his friend. They will be here soon.

Lady S. Nay, there you have no occasion to give yourself any trouble: leave every thing of that kind to me: you are too profuse, and too careless, in every thing.

Sea. I may at least go to the stables and give my groom orders to provide oats for their horses.

Lady S. I have a very good receipt in my receipt-book for feeding horses upon the refuse of a garden.

Sea. (*shaking his head and breaking away from her.*) No, no! that won't do. [Exit.

Enter Pry with a busy face.

Lady S. What brings you here, Pry? Did not you see Mr. Seabright with me?

Pry. I protest, my Lady, I have been looking at so many things this morning, I can't tell what is before my eyes.

Lady S. You have look'd over every thing then as I desired you: and I hope you have done it as if it were to satisfy your own curiosity.

Pry. To be sure, my Lady; and I might say so with truth too, for nothing does my heart so much good as looking thro' all them there places. And, O dear, my Lady! the chests, and the wardrobes, and the larders, and the store-rooms, that I have look'd into! but that cunning fellow, Robert, would not let me into the wine-cellar tho'.

Lady S. And you are sure you let them understand it was all to please your own curiosity?

Pry. to be sure; and I was glad I could speak the truth too, for I never does tell a lie but when I cannot get a turn served without it. I remember, my Lady, you told me long ago that this was the best rule; and I have always held you up, my Lady, for an ensample. Lord have mercy upon their souls, that will tell you over a pack of lies for no other purpose but to make people laugh! And there is all your writers of books too, full of stories from one end to the other, what will become of them, poor sinners?

Lady S. Never trouble your head about them: what have you seen?

Pry. O dear me! the sheets and the table-linen, and the pickles, and the sweetmeats, and the hams, and the bacon, that I have seen!

Lady S. Indeed, Pry!

Pry. But do you know, my Lady, there is a curious place in the house.

Lady S. What is it, pray?

Pry. A closet where they keep cordials for poor people.

Lady S. (*sourly.*) Humph.

Pry. It was kept for that purpose by the late Mrs. Seabright, and this young lady, I am told, is as fond of it as her mother was.

Lady S. Humph—every body has some maggot or other.

Pry. Certainly, my Lady, but this is a very strange one tho'. For you must know, my Lady, I thought no harm just to taste one of the bottles myself, thinking it might be some pennyroyal-water or blackberry-wine, or such things as charitable ladies give away; but I

protest it is as good liquor as any gentlewoman would choose to keep for her own use.

Lady S. I believe it has run in your head, Pry?

Pry. No, no, my Lady; whatever I may do by myself when I have a pain in my stomach, or such like, for nobody can help afflictions when it pleases Heaven to send them, I never takes more than is creditable before people. And, O my Lady! the pans of milk, and the butter, that I have seen in the dairy! And I assure you, my Lady, the servants make good use of it: they make spare of nothing: the very kitchen-maids have cream to their tea.

Lady S. Well, well; we shall see how long this rioting will last.

Pry. And I have been in the garden and in the orchard too—But stop! I hear a noise in the bushes.

Lady S. (*looking around alarmed.*) Why did you talk so loud, you gossipping fool? Come with me into the house. [Exeunt Lady Sarah *and* Pry, *looking round alarmed.*

Enter Gardener, creeping from amongst the bushes, and shaking his fist and making faces after them.

Gar. I have been in the garden and the orchard too! hang'd jade! we shall see who comes off winner at last. [Exit.

Scene III.

Enter Seabright followed by Robert.

Sea. (*speaking as he enters.*) And he'll call again you say? His name is Plausible?

Rob. Yes, Sir; he is a very grave, sensible looking man.

Sea. And has nobody else call'd?

Rob. No, Sir.

Sea. No letters for me?

Rob. No, Sir.

Sea. Nobody applying for franks?

Rob. No, Sir.

Sea. (*aside.*) Stupid dolts! (*aloud.*) So much the better. Be in the way when I call for you. [Exit Robert.] Well, this is strange enough: nobody soliciting; nobody coming to pay their court to me; nobody asking me even for a frank: it is very strange! (*after musing some time.*) Ha! but there is a bad spirit in men, which makes them always unwilling at first to acknowledge the superiority of him who has been more nearly on a level with themselves. It is only when they see him firmly established, and advancing in the path of honours, that they are forced to respect him. (*after walking across the stage proudly.*) And they shall see me advance. I am not a man to stop short at such beginnings as these, after the high connexions I have made: I feel that I am born for advancing. The embarrassment of public affairs at present offers my activity a fair field for exertion. (*a great noise and clamour heard without.*) What is that? Who waits there?

Enter Robert.

What a cursed clamour and noise is this I hear?

Rob. Only my Lady, Sir, who has been all over the house with Mrs. Pry, and laying down some prudent regulations for the family.

Sea. And what have the Servants to say to that?

Rob. A pretty deal, Sir: they are no wise mealy mouthed about the matter; and they're all coming to your honour with it in a body.

(*The noise without still coming nearer.*)

Sea. Don't let the angry fools come to me; I'll have nothing to do with it. Go, tell them so.

Rob. Very well, Sir; I'll be sure to tell them, he, he, he!

Sea. What, sirrah! is it a joke for you?

Rob. I did'nt laugh, Sir.

Sea. (*very angry.*) But you did, you damn'd fool!

(*Voices without.*) I'll tell his honour of it, that I will. His honour is a good master, and has always kept his house like a gentleman.

Sea. Did not I tell you not to let those angry idiots come to me? [Exit *by the opposite side from the noise, in great haste whilst* Robert *pushes back the crowd of servants, who are seen pressing in at the door.*

Rob. Get along all of you! his honour won't be disturb'd. [Exeunt; *a great clamour heard as they retire.*

Scene IV.—Lady Sarah's Dressing Room.

Enter Lady Sarah, followed by Sophia, carrying a work-basket in her hand, which she sets upon a work-table, and sits down to work.

Lady S. (*sitting down by her.*) Now I hope, Miss Seabright, I may flatter myself with having more of your company this morning than you generally favour me with. If Lord Allcrest does not come at an early hour, we shall have time for a good deal of work. When a young lady is industrious, and is not always reading nonsensical books, or running up and down after children, or watering two or three foolish flower-pots on her window, she can do a great many things for herself, that enable her to appear better dress'd than girls who are more expensive. (*pausing*) You don't answer me.

Soph. Indeed, Ma'am, I had better not, for I don't know what to say.

Lady S. You are a very prudent young lady, indeed, to make that a reason for holding your tongue.

Soph. It is a reason, indeed, which elder ladies do not always attend to.

Lady S. What gown is that you have put on to-day? It makes you look like a child from the nursery.—Mr. Supplecoat is to accompany Lord Allcrest, who is a very prom

ising young man, of good expectations, and I could have wish'd you had dress'd to more advantage. There is a young friend of mine scarcely a year older than yourself, who is just going to be married to one of the best matches in the country; and it is of great importance to have a daughter of a large family well and early settled in life.

Soph. (*looking very much surprized.*) O how different! My poor mother used to say, that young women ought not to be married too early, but wait till they had sense to conduct themselves at the head of a family.

Lady S. Some of them would wait till they were pretty well wrinkled then.

Soph. It must be confessed that some, who do wait till they are pretty well wrinkled, are fain at last to marry without it. (*Voices heard without.*)

Lady S. (*rising quickly.*) It is my brother's voice: he is come early.

Enter SEABRIGHT, Lord ALLCREST, and Sir CRAFTY SUPPLECOAT.

Lady S. My dear brother, I am rejoiced to see you. (*holding out her hand to Lord* Allcrest, *who salutes her, and then curtesying very graciously to Sir* Crafty.)

Lord A. I am happy to see you look so well, sister.

Sir C. Lady Sarah looks as a bride ought to look, fair and cheerful.

Lady S. And Mr. Supplecoat talks as a courtier ought to talk, I need not say how.

Lord A. I beg pardon; let me have the pleasure of introducing Sir Crafty Supplecoat to your Ladyship.

Lady S. Every new honour that Sir Crafty acquires must give me pleasure. And permit me to introduce to your Lordship, Mr. Seabright's—I mean my daughter, who has many good qualities to make her worthy of your esteem. (*presenting* Sophia *to Lord* All. *and then to Sir* Crafty, *who afterwards modestly shrinks back, behind Lady S.*)

Sea. (*aside to Lady S. pulling her by the sleeve.*)
What, is he made a baronet?

Lady S. (*aside.*) Yes.

Sea. (*aside.*) A baronet, not a knight?

Lady S. (*aside.*) No, no! a baronet, certainly.

Sea. (*aloud.*) Permit me again to say how happy I am to see your Lordship in this house: I hope you and Sir Crafty will not run away from us so soon as your letter gave us reason to fear.

Lord A. You are very obliging, my good Sir; but my time, as you may suppose, is of some little importance at present, and not altogether at my own command.

Sir C. His Lordship's time has been so long devoted to the public, that he begins to believe it has a right to it.

Lord A. (*affecting humility.*) Why, I have been placed, without any merit of my own, in a situation which gives my country some claims upon me: ever since the time of Gilbert, third Earl of Allcrest, the chiefs of my family have pursued one uniform line of public conduct.

Sir C. For which they have been rewarded with one uniform stream of ministerial approbation.—Changes of men and of measures have never been able to interrupt the happy and mutual uniformity.

Lord A. I believe, indeed, without the imputation of vanity, I may boast of it. The imputation of pride I am not so anxious to avoid: it more naturally attaches itself to that dignified stability; that high integri—I mean that public virt——I should say—(*mumbling indistinctly to himself*) which my family has been conspicuous for.

Sir C. Pride is a fault that great men blush not to own—it is the ennobled offspring of self-love; tho', it must be confess'd, grave and pompous vanity, like a fat plebeian in a robe of office, does very often assume its name.

Lord A. Ha, ha, Sir Crafty! you have a pleasant imagination: one can see that you sometimes read books.

Sir C. I would rather follow your example, my Lord, in the more agreeable study of men. No; I very seldom take a book in my hand, unless it be patronized by some great name, or have the honour, as has been the case with one of our best works lately, to be dedicated to your Lordship.

Lord A. I am obliged to you, Supplecoat; I am sure I am very happy if a name of so little importance as mine can be of any use to the learned world. We all owe learning a great deal.

Sir C. I am sure the patronage of your Lordship's name is a full recompense to learning for all the obligations you owe her.

Lord A. (*bowing graciously, and then turning to* Seabright, *as if modestly to interrupt the stream of his own praise.*) Mr. Seabright, I must have a conversation with you in your library, when you can bestow as much leisure upon me. Most of our elections are already decided, and the ensuing parliament bids fair to be as united and as meritorious as its predecessor. In those places where I have the honour to possess some little influence, the constitution, the government, or ministry—that is to say the same thing, you know, will find hearty and zealous supporters: I think I may depend at least on the member for Crockdale. (*bowing.*)

Sea. I hope I shall always be found to merit the friendship and alliance I have the honour of bearing to your Lordship.

Lord A. (*drawing back coldly.*) Friendship is always the strongest tye, Mr Seabright: indeed the only one that is now held in any consideration, or indeed ever mentioned.

Sea. (*mortified and drawing back also*) I am ready to attend you, [my Lord, whenever

you please; I shall have the honour of shewing you the way to my library.

Lord A. I am infinitely obliged to you. Will you go with us too, Sir Crafty? You have a list of the voters for Underwall in your pocket. The ladies will excuse us. [EXEUNT *Lord* All. *Sir* Crafty, *and* Sea. *who goes out with them and re-enters almost immediately.*

Sea. (*to Lady S.*) His Lordship sent me back to borrow your spectacles.

Lady S. Spectacles! I use no such thing.

Sea. He says you do.

Lady S. O yes, there is a particular kind which I sometimes look thro' to examine any thing very minutely.

(*After receiving the spectacles and going to the door, he suddenly stops and turns back.*)

Sea. But is it your brother's interest that has made Supplecoat a baronet?

Lady S. I dare say it is.

Sea. Yes, yes! I make no doubt of it. [EXIT, *hurrying away.*

Lady S. (*to* Soph. *angrily.*) What made you, child, skulk behind backs so, like a simpleton?—You can be fluent enough when there is no occasion for it, and when you ought to speak you have not a word to say for yourself. This is true nursery breeding.

Soph. Indeed, Madam, you may thank yourself for it; for after what you said to me, before they arrived, about Sir Crafty Supplecoat and marrying, I could not bear to look at him; and every time he looked at me, I felt strange and mortified, just as if I had been set there to be looked at. He is the most disagreeable man I ever saw in my life.

Lady S. Don't be uneasy; you have little chance, I'm afraid, of being molested by him. But I forget: I must write to my friend, Mrs. Cudimore; her husband is in credit now, and I have been too negligent a correspondent. [EXIT.

Soph. (*sighing deeply.*) O dear! O dear! O dear me! she sleeps quietly under the green sod that I would right gladly lie down beside. [EXIT *sorrowfully.*

SCENE V.—A SMALL ROOM WITH SOPHIA'S BOOKS AND MUSIC, AND FLOWER-POTS, &C. SET IN ORDER.

Enter SOPHIA very sorrowfully, leaning upon NURSE.

Soph. O my dear nurse! you are our best friend, and so she is going to send you away from us.—What will become of the poor children now? What will become of us by-and-by? And my father, too? even my father. Oh how it grieved me to see him courting that proud Lord, who seems ashamed to consider him as a brother-in-law! To see even my father looked down upon—it goes to my heart.

Nurse. Let him take what he gets, an' a murrain to him! he had no business to bring her here to torment us all, after the dear lady we have lost.—But dry up your tears: we'll be revenged upon her: there is not a creature in the house that has not swore it: we'll be revenged upon her.

Soph. What do you mean, nurse?

Nurse. I must not tell you, my dear young lady; it is not proper that you should know any thing of it: but all the servants are joined in a plot, and they'll damp her courage, I warrant ye, they'll scare her finely.

Soph. (*skipping and clapping her hands.*) O, I shall be so glad to have her well scared! And I wish they would steal that nasty dog of her's, for she is kind to no living creature but it.

Nurse. Nay, to give the devil his due, I believe she is growing fond of little Tony.

Soph. Little Tony?

Nurse. Yes, indeed. It is strange enough, but the other day as she passed thro' the hall, we were all looking sourly enough upon her, no doubt, when, what possessed the child I don't know, but he held out his arms to her, and smiled.

Soph. Nasty little toad! to hold out his arms to her.

Nurse. And, would you believe it, she took him in her arms, kissed him very kindly, and has taken to him wonderfully ever since.

Soph. And do you think she really loves him?

Nurse. Upon my honest word, I do.

Soph. O then, don't let them do any harm to her: don't let them take any revenge upon her; if she love Tony, I would not have her hurt

Nurse. O, but she loves none of the rest; she is as hard as a millstone to the other two. O la! here comes that fine Sir Crafty, as they call him: I wonder what can bring him here: can he be coming after you, Miss Sophy? (*with a significant smile.*)

Soph. Now don't say so, nurse, for you know I can't bear it.

Enter Sir CRAFTY SUPPLECOAT, advancing to SOPHIA with a very courteous smiling face, whilst she shrinks back and keeps close to NURSE.

Soph. (*aside.*) O don't go, nurse.

Sir C. Lady Sarah has had the goodness, Miss Seabright, to send to you a very willing messenger, who is happy to find any pretence in the world to present himself before you.

Nurse. (*aside to* Soph.) It is just as I said. (*aloud to Sir C.*) Meaning yourself, Sir?

Sir C. Yes; well guess'd, nurse! you are cunning enough, I see: you have the true sagacity about you that becomes your occupation; and I doubt not that your young lady has profited by your very instructive society. Now that you have found out the messenger, perhaps Miss Seabright herself may guess what his errand is.

(*with an affected smile.*

Nurse. (*aside to* Sophia, *who shrinks back still more.*) Ay, it is very like courting, I assure you.

Sir C. (*advancing as she recedes.*) Will not Miss Seabright do me the honour to bestow one thought upon it? I cannot doubt of her ability to guess my errand, if she will have the condescension.

Nurse (*aside to* Soph.) Yes, yes; it is the very thing: I have heard many a courtship begin after this fashion.

Soph. (*to Sir C., very much embarrassed and frightened.*) I—I—I'm sure I don't know.

Sir C. (*still advancing towards her as she recedes, with a more intolerable leer on his face.*) Nay, do have the goodness to give me this proof of the skill you have acquired in this refined academy of improvement, and tell me on what errand I am come.

Soph (*becoming angry.*) I'm sure I don't know, unless it be to make a fool of me, and I don't think I need to stay any longer for that purpose. (*runs out.*)

Nurse. (*running after her.*) Don't run away, Miss Sophy: he is a good looking gentleman, and very civil spoken, too. [Exit.

Sir C. (*looking after them.*) Ha, ha, ha!

Enter Sharp at the side by which they have gone out.

Sharp. You are merry, Sir: I believe I can guess what amuses you.

Sir C. I dare say thou canst, Sharp; it is easy enough to see what they have got into their foolish heads. Ha, ha, ha! does the political Lady Sarah think to put off her troublesome nursery girl upon Crafty Supplecoat? But let me encourage the mistake for a little, it will strengthen my interest with Lord Allcrest, which at present is necessary to me.—Thou understand'st me, Sharp.

Sharp. Yes, yes, Sir; and you'll have little trouble in keeping it up; for the servants, thanks to Mrs. Pry's gossiping, who is in her lady's secrets, have got it so strongly into their heads, that if you but pick up the young lady's glove when she drops it, they think you are putting a ring on her finger.

Sir C. I thank thee, Sharp; and if thou can'st at any time pick up, in thine own way, any information that may be useful to me, thou shalt not go without thy reward. And how does the young lady like her step-mother's scheme? hast thou heard them talk about that?

Sharp. Nay, they say she dislikes it very much, and is deucedly shy about it.

Sir C. (*smiling conceitedly.*) Poo, poo, poo! She must be allowed to have her little management as well as older people: deceit is inherent in the human mind. I came here at Lady Sarah's desire to request that she would bring her music book into the drawing-room, and play to us; and she took it into her head———but what brought you here to seek me? Is the horse-dealer come to look at my ponies?

Sharp. Yes, Sir.

Sir C. Then I must go to him. [Exit Sir Crafty, *whilst* Sharp *remains behind, musing as if in serious thought about something.*

Enter Robert, in a great rage.

Rob. Ay! what damn'd tricks are you thinking of? I have overheard, at the door here, all that you and your vile master have been saying. My young lady to be made a fool of for his conveniency, indeed! She's a match for a better man than him any day in the year; there is not a lord of the land too good for her. But I'll be revenged upon him, vile serpent that he is! I'll be revenged upon him!

Sharp. Well, don't be so loud, my good Robert, and you will perhaps be satisfied.—He has twice promised to get me a place or to raise my wages for me; and if he break his word with me a third time,—I know what.—Come, man, let us go and have a glass together. [Exeunt.

ACT III.

Scene I.—A small country inn near Seabright's house.

Enter Beaumont, Morgan, and William Beaumont.

Bea. (*to Mor.*) Well, my good Sir, how do you like travelling once more a little easy forenoon's journey in your native country?

Mor. Every thing in my native country is pleasant to me, or at least ought to be so; but I don't know; I return to it again like a dog to a deserted house; he begins to wag his tail at the threshold, but there is nobody to welcome him in: there is another generation grown up that knows not me; there is nothing but young people now in the world.

Bea. But those young people will love and esteem you, and honour you. The caresses even of cheerful infancy go very kindly to an old man's heart. Come, come! you shall see the promising family your niece has left behind her, and your heart will warm to them. Seabright has, I fear, set an ungracious step-mother over their head; but she, perhaps, looks more so than she is.—Here comes our landlady.

Enter Landlady.

Good morning, Mrs. Thrifty.

Land. (*to* Bea.) O Sir! I be glad to see you!

Bea. I thank you, good landlady: take good care of my wife.

Land. That I will, Sir; she's in the green chamber, giving orders to her maid. And this young gentleman is your son, I suppose. (*turning, and curtesying to* Wil.)

Bea. Yes, my good ma'am.

Land. Blessings on him! Ay, if he be like his father, the blessings of the widow and the

helpless will rest upon him.—You are going to the Squire's, I suppose?

Bea. Yes, landlady; how does the family do?

Land. O lud, Sir! what an alter'd family it be! the servants a-grumbling; the lady a-scolding; the Squire himself going up and down like a man possess'd, as they tell me, and can't sleep in his bed o' nights for writing to dukes and lords and such like, and tormenting himself, poor man, just to be made a Sir or a Knight, or some nonsense or other of that kind:—and then all the poor children; it grieves me to see them like so many chickens that have got no dam to gather them together, tho' I'm sure that dear good young lady does all that she can for them. I sees her every morning from the room overhead, which overlooks their garden, walking with them as if she were the mother of them all, tho' I warrant you she's soon snubb'd into the house again: O it grieves me to see them!

Will. (*eagerly.*) In the room overhead, did you say? and in the morning? about this time?

Land. I don't know if just at this very time.

Will. I dare say she is. (*going out eagerly.*)

Bea. But you wanted to read that paragraph about your friend, William, and here is the newspaper just come.

Will. (*impatiently.*) O hang it! not now: I don't care if I never read it.

[Exit *quickly*.

Bea. (*to* Land.) And he can't sleep in his bed, they say, for writing letters to great people?

Land. Yes, Sir, so they say; but there may be other reasons for a man not resting in his bed.

Bea And what other reasons may there be?

Land. Sir, my grandfather was sexton of the parish, and would have thought nothing of digging you a grave in a dark winter evening, or ringing the church bell in the middle of the night, with never a living creature near him but his dog and his lantern; and I have myself sat up with dead corpses ere now, and I can't but say they always lay very quietly when I was with them; therefore I'm not a very likely person, you know, to give heed to foolish stories about ghosts and such like. Howsomever, the servants say that they hear strange noises since their new lady came home; and some of them swears that they have heard their late lady's footsteps walking along the hall in the middle of the night, as plainly as when she was alive.

Bea. That is strange enough, landlady.

Land. To be sure it is, Sir; but what shall we say against it? for if misers come back to the world again to look after their gold, why may not a mother come back to it again to look after her children, oppress'd by a hard-hearted step-mother?

Bea. Indeed, it would be difficult in this case to gainsay it. But let us have coffee in the next room, I pray you, as soon as you can.

Land. Immediately, Sir. [Exit Landlady.

Bea. This is a strange untoward account that our good landlady gives us of the family. One can find out, however, that domestic comfort is no more the lot of poor Seabright—but we shall see when we go to him what state he is in.

Mor. You will see yourself then, for I shan't go to him at all.

Bea. No! don't say so, my good friend: he was an affectionate husband to your niece, and an indulgent father to her children. (Mor. *shakes his head.*) When his wife died, his old habits were broken up; he is of an aspiring disposition; a high alliance and a borough presented themselves to him, and he fell into the snare. (Mor. *still shakes his head.*) He has married a woman who is narrow-minded naturally; but that disposition has been strengthened by circumstances: she has long been left, as a single woman, to support high rank upon a very small income, and has lived much with those to whom begging and solicitations are no disgrace: differently circumstanced she might have been more respectable, and when differently circumstanced she may become so.

Mor Go to him thyself, Beaumont: I am an old man; my life's bark has been long buffeted about on a stormy sea, and I have seen cruel sights. I do not look upon my fellow-men with the same gentle eye as thou dost: I cannot love them myself, but I love thee because thou dost it: so e'en take me home to thine own house! no other house will I enter; and let me have an arm-chair by thy fire-side to end my days in, where I may sit at my ease, and grumble at the whole human race.

Bea. No, no! you shall see all your relations; and love them too, and do what is right by every one of them.

Mor. Do it for me then: I can't be troubled with it. Take my fortune into your own hands, and dispose of it as you please.

Bea. No; you shall do it yourself; and the blessings of those you bestow it upon shall fall on your own head undivided and unintercepted.

Mor. I will take the simplest and shortest way of settling my fortune; I'll give it all to your son.

Bea. (*Stretching himself up with a proud smile.*) Yes, if he will have it.

Enter William B. with great animation.

Will. I've seen her, father! I've seen her!

Bea. Who have you seen?

Will. My cousin Sophy: she is in the garden just now with all the children about her; and they have pulled off her hat in their play, and she looks so pretty—I—I mean good-humour'd, and—

Bea. (*smiling.*) There is no harm in calling

her pretty, William.—But Mr. Morgan has got something very serious to say to you: he wishes to settle his fortune upon you.

Mor. Yes, my brave William, every shilling of it.

Will. What! and Sophia and all the little Seabrights, who are as nearly related to you, to have nothing!

Mor. It shall be all your own.

Will. (*with great vehemence.*) Hang me, then, if I take one sixpence more than my own share!

Mor. Ah! I see how it is: I am a blasted tree from which no sapling shoots: my grey hairs are despised.

Will. O say not so, my good Sir! (*Bending one knee to the ground, and kissing the old man's hand.*) I will bow my head as affectionately beneath your blessing as the most dutiful child. But you shall have many children to respect and love you! and one of them —O you shall see one of them that will make your heart leap with pleasure.

(*Hurrying away.*)

Bea. Where are you going in such haste?

Will. Never mind; I'll soon return. [EXIT.

Mor. (*to* Bea. *who looks significantly to him.*) Yes, my friend, he was sent to you from Him who has given you many blessings.

Bea. But none like this. (*Fervently.*) He is a brave and upright spirit, passing with me thro' this world to a better. When he was but so high, yea, but so high, how his little heart would spurn at all injustice!

Enter MRS. BEAUMONT.

Mrs. B. Where is William?

Bea. He is gone over the way, I believe, to fetch Sophia here.

Mrs. B. I'm glad of that: I came here only to see her, and I will never enter Seabright's door again as long as I live.

Bea. "As long as I live," my dear, is a phrase of very varied significations: it means the term of an angry woman's passion, or a fond woman's fancy, or a———

Mrs. B. Or a good man's simplicity, Mr. Beaumont. Do you think I will ever enter the house where that woman is the mistress; unfeeling, indelicate, uncivil?

Bea. But she won't squander his fortune, however; and that is a good thing for the children.

Mrs. B. Poo, Mr. Beaumont! the wickedest creature on earth has always your good word for some precious quality or other.

Bea. Well, my dear, and the wickedest creature in the world always has something about it that shews whose creature it is—that shews we were all meant for a good end; and that there is a seed—a springing place—a beginning for it, in every body.

Mrs. B. It is a very small speck with her, then, I'm sure, and would elude any body's search but your own.

Bea. Now, Mr. Morgan, don't think hardly of my wife's disposition, because she is angry at present: I assure you she is a very good woman, and has an excellent heart. She is in all things better than myself, tho' I'm of a more composed disposition.

Mrs. B. (*softened.*) My dear Beaumont! I chide you as a child, and I honour you as a man! But no more of this.—Does William tell Sophia that she is to meet her great-uncle here?

Mor. I hope he will not: I should wish to be unknown for some time, that I may observe and determine for myself, since you will make me act for myself.

Bea. Go, then, into the next room with Mrs. Beaumont: I'll wait for them here, and if he has not told her already, I'll desire him to conceal it. I hear them coming. [EXEUNT MRS. B. *and* Morgan.

(Enter WILLIAM B. leading in SOPHIA.)

Soph. But who are you taking me to see?

Will. You shall know by-and-by.—But do stop a moment, Sophy, and pull back the hat a little from your face: you look best with it so. (*stopping and putting her hat to rights.*) That will do.—And throw away that foolish basket out of your hands (*taking a flower-basket from her, in which she seems to have been gathering rose-leaves, and throwing it away*); and pray now hold up your head a little better.

Soph. What is all this preparation for?

(Bea. *Who had retired to the bottom of the stage, unobserved by them, now advances softly behind* Soph. *and makes a sign to* William *to be silent.*)

Will. You are to see somebody that loves you very much, and likes to see you look well, you know; you are to see your aunt.

Soph. But there is somebody else you told me of.

Will. Yes, there is an old connection of ours with her; and pray now, Sophy, look pleasantly upon him; for he is an old man, and has met with misfortunes; he has been in foreign countries; he has been in prsions, and has had chains on his legs.

Soph. O then, I am sure I shall look upon him kindly!

[EXEUNT Soph. *and* Will. *followed at a distance by* Beaumont.

SCENE II.—A LARGE ROOM IN SEABRIGHT'S HOUSE. LADY SARAH IS DISCOVERED SITTING BY A TABLE WRITING, NEAR THE BOTTOM OF THE STAGE.

Lady S. There is so much light thrown across my paper here, it makes me almost blind. Who's there? is it you, Pry?

Enter PRY from the adjoining room.

Pry. Yes, my Lady; I sits in this room here pretty often, for the servants are vulgar and rude to me, and my own room is so lonesome I can't bear to be in it. Not that I hear any of them noises, excepting in the night time; yet I can't help thinking of it all day long when I am alone.—First it comes to my

door, "lowe, lowe, lowe!" just like a great bull: then it comes presenty after, "scrie, scrie, scrie!" just like a raven, or a cock, or a cat, or any of those wild animals; and then for the groans that it gives—O! an old jack that has not been oil'd for a twelve month is a joke to it.

Lady S. (*gravely.*) Remove this table for me to the other end of the room: it is too much in the sun here. (Pry *removes the table near the front of the stage, and Lady* S. *sits down to write again, without speaking; then looking up and seeing* Pry *still by her.*) Leave me.

Pry. I'm just going, my Lady. I believe I told you, my Lady, that Robert tells me, the vicar always expects the present of a new gown and cassock when he is sent for to lay a ghost in any genteel house.

Lady S. Leave me, I say; I'll hear no more of that nonsense at present. [Exit Pry, *and enter* Seabright.

Sea. What has that absurd creature been chatting about?

Lady S. Still about those strange noises.

Sea. I thought so; every noise is a thief or a ghost with her. Who are you writing to?

Lady S I am writing to Lady Puler, to beg she will have the goodness to send me a few lines by return of post, to let me know how her rheumatism does· her husband, you know, may have it in his power to serve you.

Sea. (*nodding.*) That is very right, my dear.

Lady S. And here is a letter I have just written to Lady Mary Markly: she is a spiteful toad, and I never could endure her; but she is going to be married for the third time to a near relation of the minister's, and it will be proper in me, you know, to be very much interested in her approaching happiness.

Sea. Yes, perfectly right, my dear Lady Sarah; I won't interrupt you. (*sits down.*)

Lady S. Indeed, my dear Seabright, I have been in the habit of studying these things, and I know how to make my account in it. If people would but attend to it, every acquaintance that they make, every letter that they write, every dinner that they give, might be made to turn to some advantage.

Sea. (*hastily, with marks of disgust.*) No, no! that is carrying it too far!

Lady S. Not at all, Mr. Seabright! I sent a basket of the best fruit in your garden this morning even to old Mrs. Pewterer, the Mayor of Crockdale's mother-in-law, and I dare say it won't be thrown away.

Sea. (*smiling.*) Well, that, however, was very well thought of. But I interrupt you. (*she continues to write, and he sits musing for some time, then speaking to himself.*) A baronet of Great Britain and seven thousand a year! (*smiling to himself.*) Ay, that would be a resting-place at which I could put up my horses, and say, I have travell'd far enough. A baronet of Great Britain, and seven thousand a year

Lady S. (*looking up from her paper.*) A baronet of Great Britain you will soon be; this day's post, I trust, will inform you of that honour being conferred upon you; but the seven thousand a year, I wish we were as sure of having that added to it.

Sea. I wish we were; but Mr. Plausible has been with me last night, and has pointed out a way to me, in which, by venturing a considerable capital on very small risk, a most prodigious gain might be made; and in which, money laid out——

Lady S. (*interrupting him eagerly.*) Will never return any more! (*getting up alarmed.*) Pray, pray, my dear Seabright, don't frighten me! The very idea of such a scheme will throw me into a fit.—Don't let that man enter the house any more—he is a dark-eyed, needy-looking man—don't let him come here any more.

Sea. Why, what alarms you so much? he is a very uncommon man, and a man of genius.

Lady S. Keep him out of the house, then, for Heaven's sake! there is never any good got by admitting men of genius; and you may keep them all out of your house, I'm sure, without being very inhospitable

Sea. Your over-caution will be a clog upon my fortune.

Lady S. A clog upon your fortune, Mr. Seabright! Am not I doing every thing that a woman can do to advance it? am not I writing letters for you? making intimacies for you? paying visits for you? teazing every body that is related to me within the fiftieth degree of consanguinity for you?—and is this being a clog upon your fortune?

Sea. Well, well! we shall see what it all comes to.

Lady S. Yes, we shall see; this very post will inform you of our success; I'm sure of it; and see, here are the letters.

Enter Pry with letters, which she gives to Sea.; and then puts one down on the table for Lady Sarah, who is so busy looking at Seabright's that she does not perceive it.

Lady S. (*to* Pry, *who seems inclined to stay.*) Don't wait: I shall call when I want you. [Exit Pry.

Sea. (*opening a letter and running his eye over it eagerly.*) Hang it! it is about the altering of a turnpike road. (*throws it away impatiently, and opens another letter which he reads in like manner.*) Stuff and nonsense about friendship, and old acquaintance, and so on! What a parcel of fools there are in the world! Ha! what seal is this? (*opening another letter eagerly.*) Hell and the devil! i is a letter from your brother, and only a common-place letter of compliment, with never a word on the subject! (*Tearing the letters in a rage, and strewing them upon the floor.*) Cursed be pen, ink, and paper, and every one that puts his trust in them!

Lady S. Don't destroy the blank sides of

your letters, Mr. Seabright, they will do to write notes upon.

Sea. O confound your little minute economy, Lady Sarah! it comes across me every now and then like the creeping of a spider: it makes me mad.

Lady S. (*putting aside her papers, much offended.*) I think I need scarcely give myself the trouble of writing any more to-day. (*seeing the letter on her table.*) Ha! a letter from my brother to me! (*opening it.*) and a later date I fancy than that which you have received. (*reads it with her countenance brightening up.*)

Sea. (*looking eagerly at her.*) What's in it? (*she is silent.*) What's in it? for God's sake tell me!

Lady S. (*going up to him with a smiling face, and an affected formal curtesy.*) I have the honour to congratulate Sir Anthony Seabright.

Sea. Is it really so? Is it really so? Let me see, let me see. (*snatches the letter from her, and reads it.*) O it is so in very truth!—Give me your hand, my dear Lady Sarah! and give me a kiss too. (*kisses her on one cheek, and she graciously turns to him the other.*) O one will do very well.—Where are all the children? let every soul in the house come about me!—No, no, no! let me be decent; let me be moderate.

Enter Plausible.

Sea. (*going joyfully to him.*) How do you do? how do you do, my very good friend?

Lady. S. (*pulling* Sea. *by the sleeve.*) You know you are engaged; you can't speak with any body at present.

Sea. I can do all I have to do very well, and give a quarter of an hour to Mr. Plausible, notwithstanding.

Lady S. (*still pulling him.*) You have many letters to write, and many other things.—You understand me?

Plau. I shall have the pleasure of calling then to-morrow morning.

Lady S. He is engaged to-morrow morning.

Plau. And in the evening also?

Lady S. Yes, Sir, and every hour in the day.—He has not yet laid out his fortune to such advantage as will enable him to bestow quite so much leisure time upon his friends as Mr. Plausible.

Plau. I can never regret the leisure time I have upon my hands, since it has given me an opportunity of obliging your Ladyship: I have procured the inestimable receipt for whitening linen without soap that I mentioned to you, and I shall bring it to you to-morrow.

Lady S. Pray don't take the trouble! I am much obliged to you: but we are all so much occupied! (*to* Sea.) Are not you going to write by return of post?

Sea. (*to* Plau.) I am really much engaged at present: the King has been graciously pleased, tho' most unworthy of it, and most unlook'd-for on my part, to honour me with the dignity of a baronet of Great Britain.

Plau. I rejoice, my dear Sir, I congratulate you with all my heart; and I have the honour to congratulate your Ladyship also.

Lady S. I thank you, Sir—good morning—good morning.

Sea. (*to* Plau.) Trifling as these things may be, yet as a mark of royal favour——

Lady S. (*impatiently.*) Yes, yes; he knows all that well enough.—Good morning. (*to* Plau.) You will positively have no time to write your letters by the return of post, (*to* Sea. *pulling him away, who bows to* Plau. *and goes with her unwillingly. Turning round suddenly to* Plau. *as they are just going out.*) Whitening linen without soap?

Plau. Yes, Madam; and no expense of any kind in the business.

Lady S. When you are passing this way, at any rate, I should be glad to look at it.

Plau. I shall have the honour very soon of calling upon your Ladyship.

Lady S. You are very obliging. You will excuse us; you will excuse us, Mr. Plausible; we are really obliged to be extremely rude to you. [Exeunt *Lady* S. *and* Sea.

Plau. (*alone.*) Ha, ha, ha! I shall keep my hold still I find.

Enter Prowler, looking cautiously about as he enters.

What do you want?

Pro. Unless you want to be laid up by the heels, don't go out of this house by the same door that you enter'd it. I have waited in the passage here to tell you.

Plau. Ha! have they found me out?

Pro. Yes, by my faith, there are two as ugly looking fellows waiting for you at the front entry as ever made a poor debtor's heart quake. There is surely some back door in this house.

Enter Robert.

(*to* Rob.) My good friend, I want to know where we can find a back way out of this house.

Rob. And I want to know when I am to have the crown I intrusted to you.

Pro. To me, Sir?

Rob. Yes, to you, Sir; and you know it very well, you do.

Pro. O! you are my friend Robert, that I was inquiring after.

Rob. Yes, Sir; and I will have my money directly; for I know you are a cheat; I know it by your very face.

Pro. Ha, ha, ha! So you prefer having a crown to-day to receiving ten guineas to-morrow?

Rob. Receiving ten fiddle-strings to-morrow! pay me my crown directly.

Pro. Very well, with all my heart; but you must sign me a paper, in the first place, giving up all right to the ten guineas you are

entitled to. (Robert *hesitates*.) Nay, nay, I'm not such an ass as you take me for: there is pen, ink, and paper. (*pointing to the table.*) Sign me a right to the ten guineas directly.

Rob. (*scratching his head.*) Well, we'll let it stand, if you please, till another time.

Pro. I thought so: faith you're too cunning for me! But shew us the way to the back door, quickly.

Rob. And should you like to come that way to-morrow, when you bring me the money? I shall be sure to be in the way to let you in.

Pro. Let us out by the back door to-day, and let me in to-morrow by any door you please. [EXEUNT.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—SEABRIGHT'S LIBRARY.—

Enter SEABRIGHT, as if from a short journey, and the ELDEST BOY running after him.

Boy. O papa, papa! I'm glad you're come back again! And have you said over your speech to the parliament? and did they say any fine speeches back again to you?

Sea. Go away, George: I'm fatigu'd; I can't speak to you now.

Enter ROBERT.

Rob. Won't your honour have some refreshment after your journey? My Lady is gone out an airing: you had better have something.

Sea. No, nothing, Robert.—A glass of water, if you please. (*sits down grave and dispirited, whilst* Robert *fetches the water, and the* Boy *plays about the room.*)

Rob. (*presenting the water.*) I'll warrant now that you have had a power of fine talking in this Parliament house; and I warrant your honour's speech was as well regarded as any of it.

Sea. I thank you, Robert: I am fatigued, and would be alone for a little: take that boy away in your hand. (EXEUNT Rob. *and the* Boy, *and* Sea. *remains some time musing with a dissatisfied face; then speaking to himself.*) "The conciseness with which the Honourable Baronet who spoke last has treated this question." Ah! but I was,—I was too concise! The whole train of connecting and illustrative thoughts, which I had been at so much pains, beforehand, to fix and arrange in my head, vanish'd from me as I rose to speak; and nothing of all that I had prepared presented itself before me, but the mere heads of the subject standing up barren and bare, like so many detach'd rocks in a desert land. (*starting up.*) This will never do! I'm sure I have not spared myself: I have labour'd night and day at this speech: I have work'd at it like a slave in a mine; and yet, when I came to the push, it deceived me, (*shaking his head.*) This will never do! let me rest satisfied with what I have got, and think of being a speaker no more.—(*stands despondingly for a little while, with his arms across, then suddenly becoming animated.*) No! I will not give it up! I saw an old school-fellow of mine in the lobby, as I went out, who whisper'd to the person standing next him as I pass'd, that I was his townsman. Does not this look as if my speech, even such as I was enabled to give it, had been approved of? O, I will not give it up! This is the only way to high distinctions: I must drudge and labour still. Heigh ho! (*yawning grievously. A gentle tap is heard at the door.*) Who's there? (*angrily.*)

Soph. (*without.*) May I come in, papa?

Sea. Yes, yes; but what do you want?

Enter SOPHIA, timidly.

Soph. I only come, my dear Sir, to see how you do after your journey. But you don't look well, papa; you don't look happy: has any thing displeas'd you?

Sea. No, my good girl.

Soph. (*kissing his hand.*) I thank you, papa, for calling me your good girl: I was your good girl.

Sea. And are so still, my dear Sophia; but you must sometimes excuse me; I am not very happy.

Soph. Ah papa! I know what makes you unhappy.

Sea. (*shaking his head.*) Thou dost not! thou dost not!

Soph. Ah, but I do! and nobody told it me neither—I can just see it my own self. You are giving yourself a great deal of trouble, and courting very proud and very disagreeable people, for what you very probably won't get; and you are grieved to think that Lady Sarah does not treat us so kindly as she might do. But don't be unhappy; don't court those proud people any more: you have enough to live upon as you used to do; and Lady Sarah will be kinder to us by-and-bye. I know she will; for she loves little Tony already; and if she should not, we will never complain.

Sea. (*kissing her.*) My sweet child! thou deservest—O thou deservest more than I can ever do for thee!

Soph. (*gladly.*) Do you say so, indeed? O then do this for me!

Sea. What is it, Sophia?

Soph. Trouble yourself no more with great people, and studying of speeches for that odious Parliament; and when Lady Sarah is out of the way, let the children come and play about you again, as they used to do.

Sea. (*tenderly.*) I thank you, my good child, but you don't understand these things. (*Walks thoughtfully across the room, and then returns to her again.*) There is an office which Lord Allcrest has promised to procure for me, that would bring me a considerable and permanent addition to my income; if I once

had that secured, I believe, in truth, it would be no unwise thing in me to follow your advice.

Soph. O, my dear Sir, I hope you will have it, then! (*skipping joyfully.*) I hope you will have it.

Enter a SERVANT, and announces Sir CRAFTY SUPPLECOAT.

Sea. Sir Crafty here! can any thing have happen'd for me?

Soph. O if it should be the place!—But shall I go away? for I don't like to see that man.

Sea. No, my dear, stay with me; I like to have you beside me.

Soph. Then I will stay; for I am happy now, and can look upon him boldly.

Enter Sir CRAFTY SUPPLECOAT.

Sea. Sir Crafty, your servant; I'm very happy to see you.

Sir C. Your servant, Sir Anthony; I'm happy in being able to pay you my respects. —Miss Seabright I hope is well. (*bowing to* Soph. *who returns his civility with cheerfulness.*) Indeed, Sir Anthony, I have long'd ever since I heard your speech in the House, which, for a maiden speech—Well, I will not say what it was.—I have long'd to declare to you the extreme pleasure I take in the fair career that is now open'd before you, and in being permitted to consider myself as one of your friends.

Sea. You do me great honour; I am infinitely obliged to you. My speech indeed ought—it ought to have—— (*hesitating.*)

Sir C. To have been just what it was, my dear Baronet. Your friends enjoy'd it: and, let me say it freely, without envy.

Sea. I am much flatter'd: their praises are —are—— (*hesitating.*)

Sir C. Are proportion'd to their admiration, Sir Anthony: and they have great pleasure in talking of it.

Sea. (*eagerly.*) Ha! do they talk much of it?

Sir C. Yes; more than I would venture to repeat to you.

Sea. Friends, indeed, say many things that ought not to be believed.

Sir C. I assure you, your's say many things which one of the qualities you so eminently possess would not, perhaps, suffer you to believe. Eloquence—eloquence, my dear Sir—great things are to be attain'd in this country by eloquence. Eloquence and high connexions give a man such velocity in moving, that nothing can stop his career.—But I ought to tell you, by-the-bye, that old Saunter is dead, unexpectedly; and that office, if indeed it can be consider'd as any object to you now, is ready for your acceptance.

Soph. (*aside to* Sea.) Is that the office, papa?

Sea. Yes, child: hold your tongue. (*aloud.*) I am obliged to you for this intelligence, Sir Crafty: an office for life, tho' not very considerable, is of some consequence to a man who has a family of children. (Soph. *takes her father's hand and presses it gratefully.*)

Sir C. Ha, ha, ha! Sir Anthony Seabright, with all his abilities and connexions, is, like a very good father, anxious to provide for his family! I thought, my dear Sir, such talents as your's had generally been accompanied with an aspiring temper; but Lady Sarah's prudent character, I perceive, has had its effect upon you.

Sea. No, no; you are wrong.

Sir C. Nay, pardon me if I say that you also are wrong, in fixing yourself down, in the very beginning of your career, as a quiet unaspiring man, who is glad to be early provided for in a quiet, humble permanency; for this office, you know, is regarded as——

Sea. (*interrupting him eagerly,*) What, is it regarded in that light?

Sir C. It really is. Mr. Trotman, now promoted to a peerage, and whose first speech, by-the-bye very much resembled your own, refused it on that very account; and Mr. Brown, and Mr. Wilson, and Sir Samuel Soppet, and many other Misters and Sirs, promoted to the same dignity, would never have got on, be assured, if they had thus fixed themselves down at the very threshold of advancement.

Sea. But I see no reason why accepting such an office as this should hinder one from advancing.

Sir C. I can give you no good reason for it, I confess; but there have been certain places, time out of mind, which have, somehow or other, been consider'd as indicative or otherwise of promotion, and which stand up in the great field of honours like finger-posts in a wide-track'd common, saying "this is the way to such a place:" they who are once possess'd of those places, move on to the others, for no earthly reason, that we can perceive, but because they have been placed in the first; and this you will readily allow is no time for innovation.

Sea. I believe there is something in what you say.

Sir C. There is so much in it, that if you can find some less aspiring friend, to whom you can with confidence give up this office, relying on his honour to assist you with the full weight of his interest on all future occasions, I am sure you will never think of accepting it.

Soph. (*laying hold of her father's arm, and speaking eagerly to* Sir Crafty.) Ah, but he will, tho'!

Sea. Sophia, you forget yourself. (*she shrinks back abash'd.*)

Sir C. (*smiling.*) It is an amiable weakness in this interested age to forget yourself, and confined, I believe, to young ladies alone.

Soph. (*provoked and roused,*) I believe, at least, political baronets, tho' not very old, do

but seldom fall into it. (*archly.*) And I know, papa, who this friend is that will so kindly take this office off your hands. Sir Crafty will name him to you by-and-bye: it is a man who does not forget himself.

Sea. (*displeased.*) What is the meaning of this, Sophia? I never saw you thus petulant before: I beg of you to retire; Sir Crafty and I must not be interrupted.

Soph. I will retire, my dear Sir—but oh! (*taking her father's hand and pressing it.*) but oh!—you know what I would say to you. [Exit, *casting a significant look to* Seabright *as she goes out.*

Sea. (*after a considerable pause.*) Sir Crafty, there is much in what you say, and I believe you are perfectly disinterested in the advice you give me; but I don't know that I could justify myself to my own mind in refusing this office.

Sir C. There are few men less interested than myself; I will say it, Sir Anthony; I will say it proudly.—Pardon me, however, I do not presume to advise you; but hearing Lord Clacker, and the Marquis of Lackland, and some others, talking of your speech, and the usual race of such abilities, and so forth, many suggestions arose in my mind, in regard to you, my dear Sir, which I very naturally supposed just now might have presented themselves to your own

Sea. Ha! did Lord Clacker and the Marquis of Lackland talk of my speech, and my abili—I mean the probable effects of my situation and connexions?

Sir C. I assure you they spoke of both in a way very gratifying for a friend, so much interested in your promotion as I am, to hear —but remember, I give you no advice: I am a young man, and apt, perhaps, to be too sanguine where the admiration of talents may mislead me: I am too presumptuous to mention my opinion at all.

Sea. (*taking his hand with warmth.*) O no! I like you the better for it! to be warmly sanguine is characteristic and graceful in youth; and perhaps this propensity does not more often mislead it than the timorous caution of age.—You mention'd a friend to whom I might resign my pretensions to this office?

Sir C. I did, Sir Anthony; but I now feel an embarrassment.—I'm sure it would never have enter'd into my imagination to think of it. But will you be kind enough to take a turn with me in the garden? there are some things that must be explain'd to you at length, lest you should at all misconceive what I am going to propose to you. [Exeunt.

Scene II.—The Servants' Hall; and Robert discovered pulling some clothes out of a bag, and laughing to himself as he looks at them.

Enter Cook-Maid.

Cook. Are you here, Robert?

Rob. Yes, beef-drippings; what do you want?

Cook. It is ghost-time, don't you know? and your night for it too.

Rob. Indeed!

Cook. Ay, indeed! I groan'd last night, and Gardener the night before; so e'en take your own turn when it comes to you: you was the first contriver of the plot.

Rob. Why don't you see me preparing, hussy? I'm going to dress myself up this very night for the grand contasterfy, as a learned person would call it.

Cook. (*clapping her hands.*) O griskins and gravy, but that be delightful! Are you to appear to her to-night?

Rob. Yes, wench; for my master is in town, and is not expected back before to-morrow. (*Holding out the clothes.*) How do you like this black robe? Has it not a smack of the devil in it?

Cook. Black! I thought you were to have been all in white, like my late lady, and to have threaten'd her for being so unkind to the children.

Rob. So I intended, Deborah; but I don't know how, a qualm came across my heart, and would not let me make a mockery and a semblance of my dear mistress; so we'll just make the devil do, my fat Deborah; he'll serve our turn well enough.

Cook. Yes; he serves many a turn, if all that is said of him be true.

Rob. How do you like that black hood with the horns to it? it is all my own contrivance.

Cook. O it will do hugeously!

Rob. And pray mix a little sooty grease for my face, cooky; and let me have some brick-dust to make a red staring ring round my eyes.

Cook. That I will in a trice! But where is your tail, master devil? Will the jack-chain be of any use to you?

Rob. No, no! let her once have a good look of my horns, and my red staring eyes, and I warrant you she'll never miss my tail.

Cook. Good success to you!

Rob. I don't doubt of success; for my lady has lived a great part of her life in an old castle in the North, and has as good a notion of a ghost or a goblin as most folks.

Cook. He, he, he! Some folks will be warm enough to-night without frying cutlets. And bless you, man! if Mrs. Pry should come in your way, give her a claw for my sake.

Rob. O never doubt that, hussy!—And here, in good time, comes Sharp to settle his part of the business; for you know we are to give his master a claw too, as well as Mrs. Pry.

Enter Sharp.

Cook. Come away, Sharp; which of us all is to visit your master's chamber to-night in the shape of the lady that he jilted, as you told

us of, because her rich uncle chose to marry whilst their wedding clothes were a-making, and who took it so much to heart, poor thing! that she died soon after of the small-pox? I should not much care to do it myself.

Sharp. No, cooky, we have a better plan than that!

Cook. What is it, man?

Sharp. Tho' he laughs at Miss Seabright as a girl from the nursery, he has taken a strong desire to know whether she likes him or not; and, above all, what fortune she is to have: now I have promised to set Pry a talking to her lady about this, when she puts her to bed to-night, and to place him snugly in the adjoining chamber where he may hear every word that they say.

Rob. You have told him there is no danger of being discover'd, as that room is always kept lock'd, and that you have stolen the key of it?

Sharp. You may be sure of that.

Rob. Then you may be sure the devil won't fail to take that chamber on his way from Lady Sarah's, and pay his respects to him in passing. Come, come! let us all set about it! I'll dress in my own garret. Take some of those things in your hand. (*Giving* Cook *some of the clothes to carry, and taking the rest himself.*) [Exeunt.

Scene III.—Lady Sarah's bed-room, almost dark, with a feeble light thrown across the floor, as from a bad fire.

Enter Sir Crafty Supplecoat and Sharp, stealing softly on their tiptoes.

Sir C. Hist, hist! which is the door, Sharp?

Sharp. Never fear, Sir; come this way. (*opening the door of an adjoining room.*) Go in, Sir, and fear nothing. But you must sit in the dark, and not be impatient: Pry won't fail to pump her lady, and you'll hear every word that is said. (*putting* Sir Crafty *into the room, and pretending to lock the door upon him, then* Exit *laughing to himself as he goes out.*)

Enter Lady Sarah and Pry, carrying lights, by the same door by which Sharp went out, allowing him time to get out of the way without meeting him.

Pry. (*setting down the lights.*) Well, I wish this night were well over, for I had such strange dreams last night.

Lady S. Don't trouble me with your dreams now. Have you put all my muslin things into the press, and screw'd them well down? When the creases are taken out of them, they will do perfectly well to wear another day.

Pry. To be sure, my Lady; but for that old petticoat, if I do but touch it, it comes to pieces; it grieves me to see your Ladyship dragging it about like a cobweb that the flies have been thro'; it would tear up into such pretty handkerchiefs!

Lady S. Will it? as large as those I commonly wear?

Pry. O no! I don't mean such handkerchiefs as you would wear, my Lady, but just——

Lady S. Don't tease me now.—Have you heard any of those noises to-night? (*seating herself in a chair near the front of the stage.*)

Pry. La no! my Lady; did you hear any thing?

Lady S. No, nothing at all: why do you look so frighten'd?

Pry. I'm sure the very thoughts of it has made my teeth to chatter like a spoon in an empty dish. I never heard of such things being heard in any house, except the old Castle of Allcrest, just before the Earl, your grandfather, died. Mercy on us! there was no such noises heard in our village.

Lady S. Apparitions seldom visit people of low condition, Pry.

Pry. God be praised for it! I hope this here will be of the same way of thinking. I would not be a great lady and have ghosts grunting at my bed-side for the whole universal world. If you please, my Lady, I should like to go up to Susan as soon as may be, pardon my boldness, for she is as frighten'd as I am; and I may chance to meet something on the stairs, if I am much later; and I know very well, my Lady, you're not afraid.

Lady S. No, I'm not afraid, but I don't know how—I have a little of I don't know what, that has come upon me.—You had better sleep on the couch by my bed to-night; I may want my drops in the night time.—What o'clock is it?

Pry. (*looking at the watch.*) Mercy on us! it's just the very time when it begins.—What's that? (*alarmed.*)

Lady S. Nothing: I heard nothing. (*a long pause; then a deep groan is heard from the bottom of the stage.*) Come, come! stand closer to me, Pry. (*taking hold of* Pry.) It had a strange, hollow, unnatural sound.

Pry. Yes; just like a body speaking out of a coffin.

(*A pause, and then a second groan is heard, louder than the first.*)

Lady S. Stand closer still, I beseech you: that was horrible! (*putting out her hand, trembling.*) Whe—whe—where is the bell-rope?

Pry. O la! you know well enough it hangs in the other end of the room.

Lady S. Go pull it then: pull it violently. (Pry *hesitates, and seems very unwilling to go.*) Go, I say! (Pry *goes; and as she is half-way across the room, another groan, followed by a terrible howl, is heard, and she runs back again to Lady* Sarah.)

Lady S. O go and do it! for heaven's sake! for God's sake! for mercy's sake do it! (Pry *then goes sidling across the floor, looking on every side with terror and suspicion, till she gets*

to the bell-rope which hangs by the head of the bed and near the door of the room; when, putting out her hand to pull it, Robert, *dressed like the devil, rises from behind a great chair close to the bed.* Pry *screams and runs out of the door, whilst he gives her a claw in the passing, and then advances towards the front of the stage to Lady* Sarah.)

Lady S. (*shrinking back as he advances.*) O come no nearer, whatever thou be, thou black and horrible sight! (*Devil still advances.*) O come no nearer! in the holy name of——

Devil. Baw! (*giving a great howl, and still advancing.*)

Lady S. In the blessed name of——

Devil. Baw! (*giving another howl, and coming very near her.*)

Lady S. (*falling upon her knees, and clasping her hands together.*) O, as thou art awful, be merciful! O touch me not, for I am a miserable sinner!

Devil. Yea, thou art—yea, thou art—yea, thou art, and thou shalt smart. Ill deeds thou dost, and thou shalt roast. (*holding his great claw over her.*)

Lady S. (*contracting all her body together, and sinking down upon the floor.*) O, as thou art horrible, be merciful! What shall I do? what shall I do?

Devil. Be kind to thy husband's children, or I will tear——

Lady S. O yes, yes!

Devil. Give them good victuals, and good education, and good clothing, or I will tear thee—

Lady S. O yes, yes!

Devil. And give no more good things to Tony than the rest, or I will—(*starting back upon hearing a loud knocking at the street-door.*) What's that?

Lady S. (*raising her head and seeing him farther off.*) No more good things to Tony than the rest! It was no devil that spoke those words, I'm sure.

(*taking courage, and getting up.*)

Devil aside, after moving farther off and listening.) Faith I'll turn and give her a claw yet! I shall never have another opportunity. (*approaching her again.*)

Lady S. Get along! I know you well enough: you are no devil, but a rascally knave. (*setting herself in a posture of defence, when a noise is heard without, and he, taking alarm, makes a hasty exit into the adjoining chamber.*)

Enter Seabright, and Pry coming fearfully after him.

Sea. Where is this devil that Pry has been telling me of?

Lady S. (*pointing to the adjoining room.*) Follow him, my dear Sir Anthony! Follow after the rascal.

[Exit Seabright *into the adjoining room.*

Lady S. (*calling to him.*) Be sure you don't let him escape.—Have you caught him yet?

Sea. (*within.*) Yes, I have caught him.

Lady S. Give him a good beating then. don't spare him! he's a good brawny devil! O don't spare him!

(*A great scuffle is heard within, and* Sea. *calls to Lady* S.) I'm dealing with him roughly enough, if that will satisfy you. (*he then calls out as if speaking to the* Devil.) And take that, and that, and that too, you diabolical rascal! You must have midnight frolicks in my house, must you?

Enter Sophia alarmed.

Sophia. What is all this? did I not hear my father's voice?

Lady S. (*looking suspiciously at her:*) Yes, you know nothing of the matter, innocent lamb!

Pry. I hope my master will give him a sound beating, for I know well enough it is that knave Robert: I could smell the very stink of his tobacco as he claw'd me in the passing.

Lady S. Drag him to the light, Sir Anthony, let us see him stript of his devil's skin. Ha! here he comes.

Enter Seabright dragging in Sir Crafty Supplecoat, who is pulled along very unwillingly, and hiding his face with his arm.

Pry. Why that an't like him neither. Come, come; take down your arm, and let us see who you are. (*pulling down his arm, and discovering his face.*)

All. (*exclaiming.*) Sir Crafty Supplecoat!

Soph. (*clapping her hands.*) O I'm glad of that! I'm so glad that it is only Sir Crafty! I should have been grieved indeed if it had been poor Robert. And so it is you, Sir Crafty! ha, ha, ha, ha! (*All join her in laughing heartily, whilst* Robert, *having pulled off his devil's dress, enters accompanied by* Sharp *and some of the other servants, and joins also in the laugh.*)

Lady S. (*going up to* Sir Crafty *with great indignation.*) And so, Sir Crafty Supplecoat, it is to your midnight mummery I am indebted for the stern and solemn threatenings I have received! I have been visited I find by a devil of consequence. Your earnest zeal for my reformation is, indeed, very flattering.

Sea. Sir Crafty, mean and despicable as you must appear to me, I have too much respect for your situation in life to expose you any longer to this open humiliation and disgrace. Come with me to my dressing room.

Sir C. I protest to you, Sir Anthony, and to Lady Sarah, and to all the world if they were here present, that I am no wise concern'd in what you suspect me of.

Lady S. O, certainly you protest, Sir Crafty! but do you think that will pass upon me? Have I not known you since you were a boy but so high, with all your little, artful, wriggling, under-hand ways of getting your playfellows' toys from them, which I always despised and contemned? To be sure, you will

protest any thing, and in the politest manner too: you will send a message to Sir Anthony to-morrow morning, I doubt not, to inquire how he does; and to hope that his fists are not too much fatigued with their last night's exertions. (*all the servants laugh again.*)

Sea. Come, come, this is too bad! Retire with me, Sir Crafty: you can say nothing for yourself at this moment. I am sorry I have rib-roasted you so unmercifully; can you walk?

Sir C. (*very shortly.*) Yes, yes.

Rob. O we'll help his honour (*going up with* Sharp, *very provokingly, to assist him.*)

Sir C. Keep off, scoundrels! you are at the bottom of all this. [EXEUNT Seabright *leading out Sir* Crafty *in a very rueful plight, followed by Lady* Sarah *and* Sophia, *and the servants endeavouring to stifle their laughter.*

SCENE IV.—SEABRIGHT'S LIBRARY. A GREAT NOISE AND CONFUSION OF VOICES IS HEARD WITHOUT.

Seabright. (*speaking without.*) Torment me no more with these things! I will hear no more complaints, and no more explanations! let me have peace, I beseech you, in mine own house, for one half hour at least. (*He enters much disturb'd, shutting the door violently behind him, and pacing up and down the room, sometimes muttering to himself, and sometimes speaking aloud.*) What! is there no getting on in this upward path of honour, unless we tear our way through all these briars and nettles?—Contention and misery at home! is this the price we pay for honour and distinction in the world? Would no honours take root on my untoward soil, till I had grubb'd up every sprig and shoot of comfort to make room for them? It were better to be a paniered jack-ass, and pick up my scanty provender from the ditch, than be a garter'd peer in such a home as this.—I had once a home! (*beating his heel rapidly upon the floor.*) —Well, well, well! I have push'd my bark from the shore, and I must take wind and tide as they set.

Enter SERVANT.

Who comes to disturb me now?

Ser. A packet, please your honour, from Mr. Plausible.

Sea. (*eagerly.*) Ha! give it me. [EXIT Ser.) Yes, it is the plan. (*tearing off the cover.*) I hold in my hand perhaps, that which shall put every domestic arrangement on such an ample footing, as must extinguish these petty broils. (*a pause, and then his countenance lightening up eagerly.*) Ah, do I indeed grasp in this handful of paper the embryo of my future fortune? In faith I could almost believe that I do! Let me go to my closet and examine it. [EXIT.

SCENE V.—A ROOM IN THE INN.

Enter SEABRIGHT and LANDLADY speaking as they enter.

Sea. So, Mr. Plausible is not yet come?

Land. No, your honour, not as I know of. There is a dark-looking, lank gentleman in the cow-yard, just now, asking our Bridget how many pounds of butter may be made out of one cow's milk in a year, and such like, and setting all that she says down in his pocket-book. He, he, he! poor thing, she scarcely knows a cow from a sheep, by reason that she is but a poor pea-picking girl from St. Giles's, that has scarcely been a month in the country; howsomever, he gets wonderfully along with his information.

Sea. Ay, that is him: he has a talent for picking up information upon every subject, and from every body: pray let him know I am here. (EXIT Land.)—(*After musing a little while*) Ten thousand a-year! and the risk of failing but a mere trifle, not to be taken into the calculation. And his reasons are good, obvious, and convincing. But let me be moderate now: let me suppose that it only brings me in six thousand a-year; even that will entitle me to a peerage.

Enter PLAUSIBLE.

Plau. I have a request to make to you, Sir Anthony.

Sea. What is that, my dear Plausible?

Plau. When you purchase the large estate in Shropshire, will you let me have an easy lease of a good pasture farm or two upon it? It will be a country retirement for me; and I find on calculation that a hundred milk-cows, well fed and well managed, will bring in no contemptible revenue.

Sea. (*smiling.*) You talk of this estate with great confidence, Plausible.

Plau. Nay, I am only certain of putting the money to buy it into your pocket; you will purchase it or not, as you please.

Sea. I begin, indeed, to think favourably of your scheme, and I appointed you to meet me here, that we might not be interrupted by Lady Sarah. Women, you know, are timorous, and have no idea of increasing a fortune except by saving. We shall look over your calculations together. If salt is raised but one penny in the pound, how many thousands do I put in my pocket?

Plau. This paper will inform you exactly. And you see I have put but one penny upon the pound; for salt being a necessary of life, greatly to increase its price would be hard and unfeeling; it would make you unpopular in the country, and in the end create a resistance detrimental to its own ends. I am for moderate and sure gains.

Sea. (*taking the paper.*) I esteem you for it; my ideas coincide with yours most perfectly in this particular: and the paper also, in which you have drawn out your plan for buy-

ing up the rocksalt, I should be glad to look over that.

Plau. Here it is in my pocket.

Enter BEAUMONT and WILLIAM BEAUMONT.

Sea. (*angrily.*) Who comes now? O it is you, Beaumont. We are busy; I shall come to you, by-and-bye, but at present I cannot be interrupted.

Bea. I must speak with you, my friend.

Sea. not at present—you see I am engaged.

Bea. (*beckoning him.*) But one word in your ear, I beseech you.

Sea. Yes, by-and-bye; at present I am busy with affairs of importance.

Bea. By-and-bye will, perhaps, be toolate; I must speak with you immediately. (*beckoning him again.*)

Sea. (*impatiently.*) I cannot speak with you just now, Beaumont, and I will not.

Bea. No, no! you will. If there be any love of God or any love of man in your heart, you will speak with me.

Sea. (*softened.*) Well then. (*goes to* Beaumont, *who whispers in his ear and endeavours to draw him away.*) No, I won't go with you, Beaumont, to be retarded and cross'd with your fears and suspicions: speak out boldly, and Mr. Plausible will answer for himself. (*smiling to* Plau.) I believe we must explain our plan to this good friend of mine, for he thinks you are going to ruin me, and he is miserably afraid of projectors; ha, ha, ha!

Plau. (*smiling placidly.*) I esteem him for the interest he takes in his friend, and I don't condemn his suspicions: there are so many absurd schemes in the world, that it is prudent to be distrustful; but I will shew him the firm ground on which we rest, and he will be satisfied. Do me the honour, my dear Sir, to sit down by me, and I'll explain it to you. (*to* Beau.)

Bea. Pray don't take that trouble, Mr. Plausible: I have no information for enabling me to judge of it: my mind has been little exercised in regard to the money affairs of the world. But though I am not a man of the world, I have one or two things to say to my friend that I wish him to attend to.

Sea. (*smiling rather contemptuously.*) Well, what are they, Beaumont? you are, indeed, not a man of the world.

Bea. Every man who risks his fortune in any scheme, believes he has good grounds to rest upon: they are such as appear feasible to him.

Sea. Feasible! ours is certain.

Bea. (*shaking his head.*) A man who is anxious to get rich is apt to let his judgment be imposed upon, and forgets how many have fail'd in the same track before him.

Sea. I wish those who are apt to give advice, would take the same thing into their consideration.

Bea. Nay, my friend, there is a social influence which we all have, even the meanest of us, over one another, and there is more advice taken in the world than you are aware of. But had every adviser from the beginning of time fail'd before me, I will never believe that he who pleads to a father in behalf of his own children will speak without effect. Hear me then; let him who stands alone, run every risk to aggrandize himself, but let a father—O let the father of a family consider!

Plau. You forget, my good Sir, that the father of a family has a higher motive than any other man to aggrandize himself.

Sea. (*vehemently.*) Rather than not place my children in the situation I desire for them, I would have no children at all.

Bea. (*with warmth.*) What, will you say of creatures passing onward to the noblest destination, you had rather they had never been, unless they can gather up so much dust and trash on their way? You think yourself an ambitious parent—O I would be for them a thousand times more ambitious than thou art.

Sea. Yes, you will shape your son's fortune out of the clouds, I make no doubt. (*smiling contemptuously.*)

Will. B. (*who has modestly kept behind, now coming forward with spirit.*) Wherever my fortune may be shaped for me, to be the honest, well-principled son of an honest and good father, is a distinction I would not give up for all that you, and men like you, are scrambling for. (*turning to* Bea.) Come away, father; they but mock at what you say.

Bea. Let him mock if he will, but let him hear me.

Plau. He will hear your advice with great pleasure from the pulpit, Mr. Beaumont.

Will B. It would have been happy for the unfortunate men who have listened to yours, Mr. Plausible, if they had received it from the same place. (*pulling* Beaumont *away.*) Come away, father, you but waste words upon them.

Bea. Nay, I would yet try if there is not some heart in him to be moved.

Sea. My dear Beaumont, you are a very good man, but you know nothing of the matter.

Will B. (*pulling away his father.*) Leave them, leave them, Sir! Good man, as he contemptuously calls you, you are also wise enough for me: and I would not exchange fathers with the proudest young lord in the kingdom. (EXEUNT Bea. *and* Will. B., Will. *putting his father's arm proudly under his, and walking off with spirit.*)

Plau. We are obliged to that young dog, however, for taking him away.

Sea. Yes; but we'll go to another room, for he may return again. [EXEUNT.

ACT V.

SCENE I.—SEABRIGHT'S LIBRARY. HE

IS DISCOVERED SITTING BY A TABLE FAST ASLEEP, ON WHICH ARE SCATTERED LETTERS AND PAPERS.

Enter PRY softly behind on her tiptoes, and making a long neck to see what he is about.

Pry. (*shaking her head piteously.*) Poor man! poor man! he can't sleep in his bed o'nights, and yet he has never committed any wicked crimes, that I ever heard of.

Sea. (*angrily, after speaking inarticulately to himself in his sleep.*) You don't know my name! (*muttering again inarticulately.*) The name of Lord Seabright! *muttering again, whilst* Pry *slips still nearer to him, listening with a face of great curiosity.*) I can't walk in my robes any longer.—See how the crowd stares at me; ha, ha, ha! (*laughing uncouthly, and* Pry *drawing still nearer him, comes against a chair on her way, the noise of which wakes him, and she retires precipitately.*)—What's that? *rubbing his eyes and looking round.*) It has been some noise in my dream. Ah! would it had been a reality!—What a busy, prosperous, animating world I have been in for these last two hours. (*looking at his watch.*) Ha! I have slept only a quarter of an hour; and I have enjoyed as many honours in that short term as would enrich my lifetime.—Shall they indeed enrich it?—Wise men, in former ages, consider'd the visions of our sleep as faintly sketching out what is to happen, like trees and castles seen thro' the morning mist, before the brightening sun gives to them the distinct clearness of reality. (*smiling animatedly.*) In faith I could almost believe it! There is that vigorating confidence within me which says I shall not stop short at these paltry attainments—A baronet! every body now is a baronet.—My soul disdains the thought; (*gives his chair a kick, and overturning it with a great noise.*)

Enter PRY alarmed.

Pry. O la, Sir! what is the matter?

Sea. What, are you up, Pry? Why are you out of bed so late?

Pry. Making your coffee, Sir.

Sea. Did not I tell you to leave it on the lamp, and go to bed?

Pry. Yes; but I thought it would keep warmer, somehow, if I sat by it myself.

Sea. (*aside.*) Great fool! (*aloud.*) Let me have some of it, then; my head will be clearer afterwards for writing. [EXIT

Pry. (*shaking her head, and looking after him as he goes out.*) Poor man! he would have every body to go to bed but himself.—What has he got here now? (*looking at the papers on the table.*) Copies of letters to my Lord B——, and notes for a speech on the salt duties; and calculations.—O lud, lud! What a power of trouble he does give himself! Poor man! poor man! (EXIT *in a hurry, calling out as she goes,*) I just stay'd behind, Sir, to stir the fire for you.

SCENE II.—A ROOM IN THE INN.

Enter Mrs. BEAUMONT and LANDLADY, by different sides.

Land. La, madam! here be the great Lord, Lady Sarah Seabright's brother, who wants to see you.

Mrs. B. Wants to see me? how comes this great condescension?

Land. I reckon, madam, that some misfortune has befallen him, and that makes some folks wonderfully well bred. I was just standing at the door, a few minutes ago, and thinking, to be sure, nothing at all of the matter, when who should I see drive past but my Lord, just turning the corner as he used to do to Sir Anthony's gate. Well, I thinks no more of the matter, when in a trice by comes that saucy-looking gentleman of his, that turns up his nose at my ale, and puts a letter into his lord's hand; upon which, after he had read it, he desired his postillions to turn round and set him down here. I'm sure as I am a living woman that something has happen'd, for he came into the house with a face as white as my apron.

Mrs. B. And wants to see me?

Land. Yes, madam; he ask'd first of all for Mr. Beaumont, and finding he had walk'd out, he ask'd next for you.

Mrs. B. But how did he know we were here?

Land. La, madam! he saw your carriage in the yard; and moreover your man told him that his master and mistress had stopp'd here on their way to Yorkshire, to see Sir Anthony's children. But here he comes, madam. Save us all! how proud and how vexed he looks! [EXIT.

Enter Lord ALLCREST.

Lord A. Madam, I am sorry to find Mr. Beaumount is gone out: I had something of importance to communicate to him, but I believe it will be nearly the same thing if I impart it to you. I—I—(*seems embarrassed.*)—It is an unfortunate affair. As to myself, I have little to do with it; but it is right that the near relations of Sir Anthony Seabright should know, that his salt scheme has entirely fail'd, and he is involved in utter ruin: they can communicate the dreadful tidings to him more properly than I can.

Mrs. B. We are obliged to you, my Lord: it is a piece of intelligence we have every day expected to hear, but which does not certainly concern us more nearly than yourself; as I, who am Sir Anthony's connexion, stand exactly in the same degree of relation to him with your Lordship.

Lord A. Yes; my sister, indeed, would gratify very foolishly a foolish inclination—but it is a recent thing, scarcely to be consider'd as a—a—a—he had many children by your sister, and lived with her many years.

Mrs. B. (*smiling with great contempt.*) I don't know, indeed, at what time, from the date of a man's marriage, he ought to claim

affinity with his wife's relations: perhaps it varies with occurrences, and misfortunes certainly have no tendency to shorten it.

Lord A. Madam, let me have the honour to inform you, that there is no term in which the chief of a noble and ancient family can be contaminated by the inferior alliances of those individuals who belong to his family: such things are consider'd as mere adventitious circumstances.

Mrs. B. You teach me, my Lord, to make very nice distinctions; and therefore, whilst I pay all respect to you as the representative of a noble family, you must likewise permit me to express for you, as an individual, sentiments of a very opposite nature.

Lord A. Good breeding, madam, will not permit me to return such an answer as you deserve; and therefore I will no longer intrude on your time.

Mrs. B. A better excuse, perhaps, might be found; but any one will be perfectly acceptable that procures me the pleasure of wishing your Lordship good morning.

As Lord ALLCREST is about to go out, enter BEAUMONT and MORGAN, and prevent him.

Bea. I am sorry, my Lord, I was not in the way when you did me the honour to inquire for me.

Lord A. (*passing him abruptly with a slight bow.*) Good morning, Sir; good morning.

Bea. (*going after him.*) You are not going to leave me thus, my Lord, angry and disturb'd as you appear to be? I cannot suffer any body, man, woman, or child, to leave me offended, if it be possible for me to part with them on more amicable terms. I flatter myself it is possible to do so on the present occasion: I am sure,—I am confident of it, if you will do me the honour to explain in what way I can be useful to you.

Lord A. I came here, Sir, upon no concerns of my own; and the conversation I have had the honour to hold with this Lady, makes any explanation of the business that brought me unnecessary.

Bea. But she is angry too, I perceive, and I will have no explanation from her. I know already the unfortunate affairs of poor Seabright; and I can explain to myself the intention of your Lordship's visit: you must have the goodness to stay and hear if I explain it right. (*taking him by the coat and preventing him from going.*) Nay, nay, my Lord! the spirit of charity and peace-making makes a well-meaning man very bold,—you shall stay.

Lord A. (*relenting and turning back.*) I do believe, Mr. Beaumont, that you are a very good man, and as such I respect you; but since you already know the misfortune of Sir Anthony Seabright, and will, from the dictates of your own good heart, open the matter to him in the best manner possible, my business with you is anticipated.

Mrs. B. Not, I believe, entirely, my Lord; for he knows nothing at all, as yet, of those nice distinctions between individual and family relationship, which may be necessary to prevent him from forming any unreasonable expectations from a noble brother-in-law. I presume your Lordship means to hurry back to town again, without seeing Sir Anthony.

Bea. Hold your tongue, Susan; your spirit is less mild than it ought to be, considering the warm good heart it belongs to. It is not so: his lordship did not intend returning to town without seeing his distress'd friend; you are wrong in the very outset of your account. Is she not, my Lord?

Lord A. (*confused and hesitating.*) If my seeing him could be of any real service, I should never—I could not certainly have thought of returning without seeing him.—But he has never attended to my opinions: my advice has been disregarded—and then, his damn'd vanity: he refused an office the other day, which I had procured for him, that would have been a competency for life—it makes me mad to think of it.

Bea. Ah, my Lord! he is in that state in which a man's errours should be remember'd only by himself: he is in adversity.

Lord A. He has thought only of himself I'm sure.

Bea. His connection with your sister has indeed been unlucky: and I can, in some degree, sympathize with your resentment.

Lord A. You mistake me, Sir; his connection with my sister is of no consequence to me; and I shall take care that it shall be of as little to her as possible, for I will make her independent of him but children!—risking every thing on one single stake, with a family of children!—I am provoked beyond all measure when I think of this.

Mrs. B. (*bridling up.*) His children, my Lord—

Bea. Now pray, my dear, hold your tongue, if it be possible! We are weak, passionate creatures: why should we rub and fret one another thus? (*to Lord* A.) I praise you much, my Lord, for the interest you take in the children; but here is a good man (*pointing to* Morgan.) who will———

Mor. Stop, stop, my good friend, and don't now lead me into any discussion upon this subject. I am disturb'd, and uncomfortable, and unequal to it. Take his Lordship by himself; and say to him what you please for me. (*to* Mrs. B.) Come with me, niece.

[EXEUNT Mor. *and* Mrs. B.

Bea. Let me have the pleasure of attending your Lordship into the fields, where we can take a short turn or two, and speak of this subject at length: I see strangers arrived; and it is noisy here.

Lord A. Most willingly. [EXEUNT.

SCENE III.—SEABRIGHT'S HOUSE.

Enter SEABRIGHT, followed by SOPHIA, the eldest boy, and the little girl.

Soph. Indeed, papa, you are in such good

humour this morning we can't help following you. I hope we are not troublesome; if we are, I'll take the children away.

Sea. No, my good children, you are not troublesome; you shan't go away. (*The children hang on his coat, and look up in his face much pleased.*)

Soph. They are so glad to hang upon you again, papa; and you are so good-humour'd this morning!

Sea. I finish'd my papers last night; and I have had some pleasant dreams too.—This is a cheerful, enlivening morning: every thing is in bright sunshine around us: it is like a day that wears good fortune on its face:—and, perhaps, it does.

Soph. I hope it does: and now that you seem so happy, papa, I would fain plead to you in behalf of a poor good man, who is not very happy at present.

Sea. And who is that?

Soph. Ah, you know very well; it is poor Robert. I know it was very wrong in him to frighten Lady Sarah; but he meant it for our good, and he will break his heart if he is not allow'd to be with us again.

Sea. Say no more of this at present, Sophia; and, perhaps, by-and-bye, he may return to us again as your own servant.

Soph. Ha! (*surprised.*)

Sea. Yes, my sweet girl; I will be very liberal to you and to all my children: I will make a good amends to you for all that is past. (*turning to the boy.*) And you, my good boy, I must think of you by-and-bye. Thou art become a stout boy, George: let me look at thy face. (*lifting up his hair from his forehead.*) Ay, it is a comely face enough: it will make a very good countenance for an admiral, or a general, or even for the woolsack, if thine inclination should lead thee that way. Let me feel thy weight too, young rogue. (*taking him up in his arms.*) Ah! would now that I could but know the rank and eminence of the future man I hold in these arms!

Soph. My dear Sir, you are so good to us, and so good-humoured this morning, I could wager those letters by the post have brought you pleasant news.

Sea. Letters by the post! I have received none.

Soph. Then you have not read them yet. You slept so much longer than usual this morning, that you were not up when they came, and they were put on the table in the next room. (*pointing off the stage.*)

Sea. Let me see them, then; if they bring me any good news they are welcome. [Exit *with a light active step.*

Soph. Now, children, did not I tell you yesterday that papa would love us again? and you see he has begun to do it already.

Boy. And so he does, Sophy; and I'm sorry I spoke so naughtily of him, for my heart jumps so when he loves me! (*looking off the stage.*) But see! what is he about now, beating his forehead and walking up and down so strangely?

Soph. O dear! something is the matter. [Exit, *alarmed.*

Boy. (*to little girl.*) Now don't ask me for those marbles at present, Emma: I can't find them, I don't know where they are. (*looking off the stage again.*) O how terrible he looks!

Re-enter Seabright, with an open letter in his hand, beating his head with his clench'd hands, and tossing about his arm distractedly, follow-ed by Sophia, who seems frightened at him, and yet wishing to soothe him. A long pause, in which he paces up and down the stage followed by Sophia, whilst the children run into a corner, frightened, and stare at him.

Soph. (*after attempting in vain several times to speak.*) My father! my dear, dear father! (*he still paces up and down without heeding her.*) O if you would but speak two words, and tell what is the matter with you, my dear, dear Sir!

Sea. I am ruined, and deceived, and undone! I am a bankrupt and a beggar!—I have made beggars of you all!

Soph. O no, father! that won't be! for God's sake don't take on so violently!

Sea. (*still pacing up and down, followed by* Soph.) I am a bankrupt and a beggar!—disgrace, and ridicule, and contempt!—Idiot, idiot, idiot! O worse than idiot!

Soph. Dear father!

(*The children run and take hold of* Sophia, *as she follows him.*)

Sea. Come not near me—come not near me, children—I have made beggars of you all!

Soph. But we will come near you, my dear father, and love you, and bless you too, whatever you have done. Ay, and if we are beggars, we will beg with you, and beg for you cheerfully.

Sea. Oh, oh, oh! This is more than I can bear! (*Throws himself into a chair, quite overcome, whilst the children stand gazing on him, and* Sophia *hangs over him affectionately.*)

Enter Lady Sarah.

Lady S. What are you doing here, children?—What is all this for?—What is the matter with you, Sir Anthony?—No answer at all?—What letter is this?—(*picks up the letter which* Seabright *had dropt in his agitation, and reads it; then breaking out violently.*) O, I told you it would come to this! I counsell'd you—I warn'd you—I beseech'd you. O Sir Anthony! Sir Anthony! what devil tempted you to such madness as this?

Soph. Oh, madam, do not upbraid him! See how he is!

Lady S. I see how it is, well enough: the devil, the devil of ambition has tempted him. —(*going nearer him with great vehemence.*) Did not I tell you that with prudence and management, and economy, we should in the end amass a good fortune? but you

must be in such a hurry to get rich!—O it would get the better of a saint's spirit to think now I have saved, and regulated, and laid down rules for my household, and that it should all come to this!—To have watched, and toiled, and fretted as I have done, and all to no purpose!—If I did not begrudge the very food that was consumed in the family! —If I did not try all manner of receipts that the wife of the meanest citizen would scarcely have thought of!—If I did not go a bargain-hunting thro' every shop in London, and purchase damaged muslins even for my own wearing!—It is very hard—it is very hard, indeed. (*bursting into tears.*) O it is enough to turn a woman's brains!

Sea. (*starting up in a rage.*) By heavens, madam, it is enough to turn a man's brains to think, that, in addition to the ruin I have brought upon myself and my children, I have taken to my bosom—I have set over their innocent heads, a hard-hearted, narrow, avaricious woman, whose meanness makes me contemptible, whose person and character I despise!—This, madam, the spirit of ambition, which you talk of, has tempted me to do; and for this, more than all his other malice, I will curse him!

Soph. (*endeavouring to soothe him.*) Pray be not so violent with her! she does not consider what she says—she did not intend to hurt you.

Lady S. Sir Anthony Seabright, you are a base man and a deceiver: my brother shall know how you have used me: he has made you a Member of Parliament and a Baronet.

Sea. Yes, and a contemptible fool, and a miserable wretch into the bargain. But no, no, no! I have made myself so; I deserve my punishment.—

Enter LORD ALLCREST, BEAUMONT, MORGAN, MRS. B. and WILLIAM B.

And here are more of my advisers and beseechers come to visit me: advance, advance, good friends! you are come to look upon a ruined man, and you are gratified.

Bea. (*going up to him affectionately.*) No, my dear Seabright; in a very different spirit are we come: we come to sympathize with you, and to console you.

Sea. I hate sympathy, and I hate consolation! You are come, I suppose, to sympathize with me too, my Lord, and to put me in mind of the damn'd place I have given up to that knave Sir Crafty Supplecoat.

Lord A. No, Sir Anthony, I scorn to upbraid, but I pretend neither to sympathize with you nor to console you: I come to rescue my sister from a situation unworthy of a daughter of the house of Allcrest, and she shall go home with me.

Sea. Nay, by the sincerity of a miserable man, but you do console me.—Take her o' God's name! I received her not half so willingly as I resign her to you again. (*taking* Lady Sarah's *hand to give her to her brother, which she pulls away from him angrily, and going up to* Lord Allcrest, *gives him her hand as an act of her own.*)

Lady S. If my brother will, indeed, have the goodness!

Boy. (*skipping joyfully.*) Sophy! sister Sophy! she is going away from us! is not that nice?

Soph. Hush, George!

Sea. (*to* Mrs. B. *on perceiving her smile to herself.*) Yes, madam, I make no doubt but all this is very amusing to you—you are also come, no doubt, to bestow upon me your contribution of friendly sympathy.

Mrs. B. Indeed, Sir Anthony, recollecting the happiness you have enjoyed, and the woman that shared it with you, you are entitled to no small portion of pity:

Bea. (*to* Mrs. B.) Fie upon it! fie upon it, Susan! can't you hold out your hand to him, and forgive him nobly, without tacking those little ungracious recollections to it? (*to* Sea.) Indeed, my dear Seabright, you look upon us all with the suspicious eye of an unfortunate man; but we are truly come to you in kindness and Christian simplicity; and we bring you comfort.

Sea. Yes, Beaumont, you come to me in simplicity. What comfort can you bring to me, ruined as I am? all my fair prospects blasted! all my honours disgraced! sunk even to obscurity and contempt! you are indeed come in great simplicity.

Bea. What comfort can we bring you? does grandeur and riches include the whole of human happiness, that you should now feel yourself inconsolable and hopeless? Cannot a quiet, modest retreat, independent of the bustle of the world, still be a situation of comfort?

Sea. I know what you mean: contemptible, slothful obscurity.

Bea. You mistake me, Sir Anthony; respectable and useful privacy.

Sea. I understand you well enough: hopeless and without object—I abhor it!

Bea. What, Seabright! can a man with a family to grow up around him, be hopeless and without object? Come here, children, and speak for yourselves. (*he takes the children in his hands, and encouraging* Sophia *to come forward, they surround* Seabright.)

Soph. (*after endeavouring in vain to speak, and kissing her father's hand tenderly.*) O my dear father! in the loneliest cottage in England I could be happy with you. I would keep it so neat and comfortable, and do every thing for you so willingly; and the children would be so good, if you would but love us enough to be happy with us.

Sea. (*catching her in his arms.*) Come to my heart, my admirable girl! thou truly hast found the way to it, and a stubborn unnatural heart it has been.—But I will love you all —yes, my children, I will love you enough to be happy with you. (*pausing.*) I hope I shall—I think I shall.

Will. B. (*eagerly.*) Yes, you will! yes, you will! if there be one spark of a true man in your breast, you will love them to the last beat of your heart.

Bea. (*smiling affectionately on his son.*) Get away, stripling! your warmth interrupts us.

Sea. O no! let him speak!—say all of you what you please to me now: say any thing that will break the current of my miserable thoughts; for we are at this moment indulging fancies as illusive as those that formerly misled me; even the cottage that we talk of, a peaceful home for my children, is no longer in my power.

Bea. (*going up to* Morgan.) Now, my friend, this is the time for you to step forth, and make a subdued father and his innocent children happy: bestow your wealth liberally, and the blessings that will fall upon your grey head shall well reward the toils and dangers that have earn'd it.

(*leading him to* Seabright.)

Sea. Ha! what stranger is this? I observed him not before.

Bea. Speak for yourself now, Mr. Morgan; I will do no more for you.

Sea. Mr. Morgan, the uncle of my Caroline!

Mor. Yes, Sir Anthony, and very much disposed, if you will give him leave, to—to love—to befriend—to be to you and yours—to be the uncle and friend of you all. (*speaking in a broken agitated voice.*)

Sea. O no! I am unworthy to receive any thing from you—from the uncle of my much-injured wife; but these children, Mr. Morgan—I am not too proud to ask you to be a friend to them.

Bea. (*hastily to* Sea.) Poo, man! you have no real goodness in you, if you cannot perceive that he must and will be a friend to yourself also. Come, come! give him a hand of fellowship! (*putting* Seabright's *hand into* Morgan's) Now, God will bless you both!

Mor. If Sir Anthony will permit an old man, who has past thro' many buffetings of fortune, to draw his arm-chair by him in the evening of his life, and tell over the varied hardships he has met with, he will cheer its gloom, and make it pass more pleasantly. (Sea. *presses* Morgan's *hand to his breast, without speaking.*)

Mrs. B. (*to* Mor.) Well said, and gracefully said, my good uncle! did not I tell you, you would go through your part well, if you would but trust to the dictates of your own good heart?

Bea. O there is nobody, when he does what is noble and right, that does not find a way of doing it gracefully.

Mrs. B. (*to* Sophia, *who is going up timidly to* Mor.) Yes, that is right, my dear. Come, children, (*leading the children up to him.*) gather all about him. Yes, take hold of him; don't be afraid to touch him; it does young people good to pat the cheeks of a benevolent old man. (Mor. *embraces them affectionately.*)

Will. B. (*joining the children in caressing* Mor.)—My dear Mr. Morgan, I love you with all my soul!—And my sweet Sophy—my good Sophy, don't you love him too?—She is such a good girl, Mr. Morgan.

Mor. So she is, William; and she must have a good husband by-and-bye to reward her. I dare say we shall find somebody or other willing to have her. (*smiling archly upon* William, *who looks abashed; and letting go* Sophy's *hand retires behind.*)

Sea. (*to* Mor.) I have now voice enough, my generous friend, to say that I am sensible of your goodness: but there are feelings which depress me——

Mor. Say no more about it, my good Sir; I am happy, and I would have every body to rejoice with me.

Lord A. (*to* Mor. *leading forward Lady* Sarah.) And every body does rejoice with you, my good Sir. Permit me to assure you, that tho', perhaps, somewhat injured with the ways of the world, I have not been an unfeeling spectator of what has pass'd; and I believe Lady Sarah also has not looked upon it with indifference. (*turning to* Sea.) Now, Sir Anthony, I would, if possible, part friends with you; and I have a favour to request, which will, if it is granted, make me forget every unpleasant thing that has pass'd between us.

Sea. Mention it, my Lord; I will not willingly refuse you.

Lord A. My sister has just now told me, that she will leave you without regret, if you will let her have your youngest boy to live with her: I join my request to her's.

Boy (*eagerly.*) What, take Tony away from us! no, but she shan't tho'!

Sea. I am much obliged to you, my Lord, and to Lady Sarah also; but I cannot find in my heart to divide my children. He shall, however, visit her frequently, if she will permit him; and if she will have the goodness to forget the hasty words of a passionate man, and still take an interest in any thing that belongs to him, he will be gratified by it.

Soph. And I will visit Lady Sarah too, if she will have the goodness to permit me.

Lady S. I thank you, my dear; it is, perhaps, more than I deserve. (*to* Mrs. B.) And may I hope, madam, that you will forget whatever unpleasant things may have pass'd between us?

Bea. (*interrupting his wife as she is about to speak.*) Now answer her pleasantly, my dear Susan! (Mrs. B. *smiles pleasantly, and gives her hand to Lady* Sarah.) Now every thing is right. O it is a pleasant thing to find that there is some good in every human being!

Enter a SERVANT, and whispers to BEA.

Is he here? let him enter then.

Sea. Who is it? I can see nobody now.

Bea. Don't be alarmed: it is a friend of your's, who has offended you, and takes a very proper season to be forgiven. It is one who durst not, in your prosperity, shew you the ex

tent of his attachment; but he has now come, for he has already open'd his mind to me upon hearing of your misfortunes, to put into your hands, for the benefit of your children, all the little money he has saved, since he first began to lay up one mite after another, and to call it his own property.

Sea. Who can that be? I did not think there was a creature in the world that bore us so much affection.

Enter ROBERT, who starts back upon seeing so many people.

Bea. Come in, my good Robert: (*taking his hand and leading him forward,*) thou need'st not be ashamed to shew thy face here: there is nobody here who will not receive thee graciously, not even Lady Sarah herself.

(*The children and every body gather round* Robert.)

Sea. (*coming forward with* Bea.) Ah, my dear Beaumont, what a charm there is in doing good! it can give dignity to the meanest condition. Had this unlucky scheme but succeeded, for if we could have but weather'd it a little while longer, it must have succeeded, I should have been—I think I should have been munificent as a prince.

Bea. Ah, no more of that, my dear friend! no more of that! such thoughts are dangerous, and the enemy is still at hand: chide the deceiver away from you, even when he makes his appearance in the fair form of Virtue.

ADVERTISEMENT

TO

THE SECOND EDITION.

In the language of the two Tragedies of this volume, a few slight alterations, I hope for the better, will be found from that of the first edition, so slight indeed, that I scarcely know whether or not they deserve to be mentioned. As for the Comedy, believing it has been generally disliked, I have been afraid to touch it, lest, going over it again, deprived of that animation so favourable to amendment which encouragement always gives, I should make it worse instead of better.

Several of my friends, since Rayner was published, and one of them, I must confess, for whose judgment I have the highest respect, before it was published, have objected to the description of the flooded river, Act v. Scene iii. as very improper in the circumstances under which it is introduced. I readily grant it may be apt to appear so at first sight; but I should think, that when those circumstances are more perfectly considered, this objection will be considerably weakened. When the Countess and Confessor are told the bridge is broken down, the distance which the Messenger must then go, in the short time allowed for it, is so great that it seems impossible, and therefore overwhelms their thoughts. To have desired the Messenger, notwithstanding, to mount his horse and set off immediately, would, as far as I am able to judge, *not* have been natural; for it is upon slight, not upon great, occasions that the mind recovers itself sufficiently from disappointment to give directions immediately as to what is next to be done. I have supposed the Countess and Confessor not as listening to the Messenger's description, but as recovering, while he speaks, from the shock, and considering whether their object is still possible. The difficulty here seems to me to be this; whether is it most natural for the Messenger himself, just returned from beholding an awful sight in nature, to have his mind most engrossed with that, or with the idea of riding to the town in time to save the prisoner, a thing which appears to him absolutely impossible? for it should be remembered that till they call him upon the stage, he has no idea of the nature of the errand for which he was kept in readiness, therefore, it could not beforehand have interested his mind. If the first of these suppositions is most natural, I should think I am in a good degree justified in introducing this passage; if the last, I am certainly wrong. It is a fault, however, easily rectified by drawing a pen across every line of the speech except the two first; and if the play should ever be acted, this must be done for another reason, viz. that no theatre could afford to put into such an insignificant character as that of a Messenger an actor capable of reciting it.—Another objection may be made to this speech, that people in his situation do not make such speeches. People in his situation of life will not, it is true, to any length make speeches of sentiment and reflection; but the strong impression made upon them by a grand and awful object, will put them, for the time being, in possession of a power of language and strength of description which I am not vain enough to suppose I can equal. The language of description, having nothing to do with artificial phrases or abstract words, is more equally at the command of all ranks of men than any other, that of strong passion excepted.

It has also been objected, from many different quarters, that the incident of Ohio sawing across the main beam of the scaffold, &c. is a very bad one, and so absurd, that it would set an audience into a roar of laughter. That it is not a good one I very readily admit; but, in representation, the absurdity, or I ought rather to say, ludicrousness of it, so far from being more obvious, would be less so than in the closet. In reading a play, what is represented as passing upon the stage, and what is related as passing elsewhere, are both brought before the imagination with nearly equal strength; but, in representation, what is only related sinks into a degree of dimness and distance, by which it is almost comparatively annihilated. This incident, however, is most certainly not happily conceived, and as it is all comprised within the compass of a very few lines, might easily be changed into any other in which Ohio is still made the agent, by any person who should be willing to bring this play before an audience.

In Act first of Constantine, Scene ii, I find that my meaning has been sometimes misunderstood. It never once entered into my idea to represent the Emperor as yielding to his wife's fears, so far as to send his friends to face the danger threatened from the outrageous multitude without him. I have made him, whilst he appears to yield, put such conduct in the meanest and most contemptible light, trusting that her generous nature would revolt from it, as an easier way of making her submit to the necessity than giving a determined refusal. In a narrative, where all the secret thoughts of the heart can be as easily made known as those which a character is made to utter, there is little excuse either for leaving your meaning in a doubtful state, or bringing it out too laboriously; but, in a story carried on entirely, or almost entirely, in dialogue, it is very difficult to avoid both these faults, into which I *confess* I am *too* apt to fail.

TO THE READER.

Though I have already met with so much indulgence from the public for a work obscured with many faults, and might venture, without great mistrust, to bring before it the Plays which I now offer, unaccompanied by any previous demand upon the attention of my reader, which is generally an unwelcome thing, I must nevertheless beg for a few minutes to trespass upon his patience.—It has been, and still is, my strongest desire to add a few pieces to the stock of what may be called our national or permanently acting plays, how unequal soever my abilities may be to the object of my ambition.* I have, therefore, in the "Series of Plays," though pursuing a particular plan, endeavoured fully to delineate the character of the chief person of each drama, independently of his being the subject of a particular passion; so that we might have an idea of what kind of a man he would have been had no circumstances ever arisen to bring that passion violently into action. I have endeavoured also distinctly to discriminate the inferior characters, because they, not being allowed to exhibit violent passion, lest they should too much interfere with the principal object, had more need of such distinct discrimination to prevent them from being altogether insignificant, and to prevent each play from becoming a mere picture of passion which might be tedious and heavy to an audience accustomed to variety of character and incident. This I have done, how unskilfully soever I may have done it, with a hope, which I will not yet abandon, that some of the dramas belonging to that work may hereafter be thought worthy of being admitted into that class of plays to which I am so desirous of adding something. However, I am sensible that were those plays more successful than I dare flatter myself to expect, they all require too much power of expression and delicacy of discrimination in the actor who represents the principal character—the whole depends too much on the exertion of one individual, and such a one too as can very rarely be found, ever to become plays that will commonly be brought upon the stage.† Convinced of this, as well as wishing sometimes to vary my employment, I have long since proposed to myself not to confine my pen entirely to one task, but to write from time to time, as inclination might lead me, or circumstances suggest, an unconnected or (may I so call it?) a free, independent play, that might have a chance of pleasing upon a stage, circumstanced as stages generally are, with no particular advantages. I have wished to leave behind me in the world a few plays, some of which might have a chance of continuing to be acted even in our canvass theatres and barns; and of preserving to my name some remembrance with those who are lovers of that species of amusement which I have above every other enjoyed.

I am well aware, however, that having succeeded in one species of writing gives us no sure grounds to presume that we shall be equally fortunate in any other; no, not even in that which most nearly approaches to it. Not only the epic poet may write a bad tragedy, but the sonnet writer may find himself greatly at a loss in composing a few tender couplets for music. I have seldom seen any piece, not appearing to me to possess great merit (for such things I have seen,) succeed upon the stage, without feeling inclined to say to myself, "don't despise this: very probably in attempting, even upon no higher grounds, such success as the present, and giving to it also the whole bent of your thoughts, you would find yourself miserably disappointed." I offer to the public, therefore, a work of a kind so nearly related to that in which I have already had some degree of success and encouragement, with almost the diffidence of an entirely inexperienced writer.

To publish a volume of miscellaneous plays, I am very sensible, is making a large demand upon the attention of my readers, and exposing the plays themselves likewise to the danger of being read in a way that will diminish their effect, and in every way prove a great disadvantage to them. People are in the habit of reading but one new play at a time, which by this means makes a full undivided impression upon the mind; and though we are not obliged to read all the plays of a volume, one following another, so that they must crowd, and jostle, and tread upon one another's heels; yet who, with a new work in his hands, if he be at all pleased with it, will shut up the book after the first portion of it is over, and wait till he has properly digested what he has got before he proceed with the remainder? I am inclined to believe that each of the plays in the series has at first suf-

* See the introduction to the 'Series of Plays.'

† Let it not be supposed fromthe a bove that I have the slightest intention of discontinuing the 'Series of Plays.' So far from it, I hope that the work will go on better for the being occasionally broke in upon by pieces of a different kind; and though I admit they are not altogether well fitted for the stage, as it is commonly circumstanced, I still think plays upon that plan are capable of being made upon the stage more interesting than any other species of drama.

fered considerably from being read in this manner; but in pieces connected with one another this mode of publication is in some degree necessary, at least there is in it more propriety. So much am I convinced of this that it was at one time my intention to publish these plays separately, and it is with some difficulty that I have been prevailed upon to give up this intention. May I then beg of my reader to pardon, in the first place, so great a demand upon his attention by offering at once a volume of plays to his perusal; in the next place, to have the goodness not to read it hastily, but to pause, some days at least, between each play, that they may have in this respect the same advantages which new plays generally have. Let him not smile : this last is a request which I earnestly make, and if it is not complied with, I shall almost be tempted to think myself hardly treated.*

I must also mention, that each of the plays contained in this volume has been, at one time or other, offered for representation to one or other of our winter theatres, and been rejected. This my reader will readily believe is not done in the spirit of vanity; and I beg of him also to believe, that neither is it at all done in that of complaint. I merely mention it, because otherwise it must have appeared absurd to introduce from the press what has been expressly written to come before the public in a different manner, without making any attempt to present it in its own peculiar mode. I must, in this case, have either appeared pusillanimously timid in shrinking from that open trial to which my contemporaries submit, or sullenly and ungraciously fastidious.

The chief thing to be regretted in this failure of my attempts is, that having no opportunity of seeing any of my pieces exhibited, many faults respecting stage effect and general impression will to me remain undiscovered, and those I may hereafter write be of course unimproved. Another disadvantage, perhaps, may present itself to the mind of my reader; viz. that not having the trial of their merits immediately in prospect, I may become careless or forgetful of those requisites in the drama that peculiarly refer to the stage. But if I know any thing at all of my own character, this will not be the case. I shall persevere in my task, circumstanced as I am, with as anxious unremitting an attention to every thing that regards the theatre as if I were there forthwith to receive the full reward of all my labors, or complete and irretrievable condemnation. So strong is my attachment to the drama of my native country, at the head of which stands one whom every British heart thinks of with pride, that a distant and uncertain hope of having even but a very few of the pieces I offer to the public represented to it with approbation, when some partiality for them as plays that have been frequently read shall have put it into the power of future managers to bring them upon the stage with less risk of loss than would be at present incurred, is sufficient to animate me to every exertion that I am capable of making.

But I perceive a smile rising upon the cheek of my reader at the sanguine calculations of human vanity, and in his place I should most probably smile too. Let that smile, however, be tempered with respect, when it is considered how much mankind is indebted to this pleasing but deceitful principle in our nature. It is necessary that we should have some flattery to carry us on with what is arduous and uncertain, and who will give it to us in a manner so kindly and applicable to our necessities as even we our own selves? How poor and stationary must the affairs of men have remained, had every one, at the beginning of a new undertaking, considered the probability of its success with the cool, temperate mind of his reasonable, unconcerned neighbour?

It is now time to say something of the particular plays here offered to the public.

In the first I have attempted, in the character of Rayner, to exhibit a young man of an easy, amiable temper, with delicacy of sentiment and a well principled mind, tempted, in the extremity of distress, to join with unworthy men in the proposed commission of a detestable deed; and afterwards, under one of the severest trials that human fortitude can be called upon to endure, bearing himself up, not with the proud and lofty firmness of a hero, but with the struggles of a man, who, conscious of the weakness of nature within him, feels diffident of himself to the last, and modestly aims at no more than what, being a soldier and the son of a brave father, he considers as respectable and becoming. One who aspires not to admiration but shrinks from contempt; and who being naturally brave in the field, and of a light buoyant disposition, bears up throughout with an animation and cheerfulness by no means inconsistent with a considerable degree of the dread of death, when called upon to encounter it

* It may be urged, indeed, that unconnected poems bound up together, and almost every other species of composition, must suffer for being read in hasty succession in the same way. And so in some degree they do. But in reading descriptions of nature, successions of thoughts, and narratives of every kind, the ideas they represent to the mind are as troops drawn out before it in loose marshalled array, whose most animated movements it surveys still as a spectator; whilst in reading a drama, where every character speaks immediately in his own person, we by sympathy rush, as it were, ourselves into the battle, and fight under every man's coat of mail by turns. This is an exercise of the mind so close and vigorous, that we retire from it exhausted; and if curiosity should urge us on without sufficient rest to the next engagement that calls for us, we enter the field bewildered, and spiritless, and weak.

with deliberation and certainty. To him I have opposed the character of a young man in whom, though with some good affections, there is a foundation of natural depravity greatly strengthened by the bad education he has received from an absurdly indulgent mother, brought by his crimes to an untimely end, and meeting it with a very different spirit.

Of the characters of the two principal women in this piece, opposed to two women of a very different description I shall say nothing. The second and inferior persons of the drama I have endeavoured to delineate with sufficient discrimination to make us feel acquainted with them, though much force or originality is a praise which I readily grant they are not entitled to.

I am afraid the varied conduct of the whole, sometimes gay and even ludicrous, sometimes tender or distressing, but scarcely at any time solemn or dignified, will be displeasing to those who are accustomed to admire tragedy in its more exalted form. I flatter myself, however, that as I have not, for the sake of variety, introduced any under-plot nor patched scenes unconnected with the main business, but have endeavoured to make every thing arise naturally from the circumstances of the story, I shall not on this score be very much censured. *

This play was written many years ago, when I was not very old, and still younger from my ignorance of every thing regarding literature than from my years. This, however, I do not mention as any apology for its defects. A work that cannot be read with approbation unless the mind is continually referring to the particular circumstances under which it was written, ought not to be brought before the public, but (when those circumstances are very extraordinary) as a literary curiosity. Reading over this work, after it had been laid by for such a length of time that it was to me almost like the work of a stranger, I thought there was sufficient matter in it, with some alterations, to make an interesting play, not unsuited to the common circumstances of even our country theatres; and indeed I have altered it so considerably that full one half of it may be said to be newly written. In the original it was uniformly written in blank verse, and in many of the scenes, particularly those approaching to comic, my reader will readily believe it was sufficiently rugged and hobbling; I have, therefore, taken the liberty of writing in plain prose all those parts where I thought blank verse would be cumbersome and stilted. The only scenes in the play that remain exactly or nearly as they stood in the original are, that between Rayner and the Old Man of the wood, in which I have scarcely altered a single word, and that, Act iv. Scene iii. between Zaterloo and his mother.

A play, with the scene laid in Germany, and opening with a noisy meeting of midnight robbers over their wine, will, I believe, suggest to my readers certain sources from which he will suppose my ideas must have certainly been taken. Will he give me perfect credit when I assure him, at the time this play was written, I had not only never read any German plays, but was even ignorant that such things as German plays of any reputation existed? I hope—I am almost bold enough to say, I know that he will. And that I may not abuse his faith by smuggling any thing under its protection not strictly entitled to it, I must inform him that the short scene between Rayner and his servant Herman which I thought in some degree necessary to shew the character and temper of the master, and to interest us in his favour before the great action of the piece begins, was entirely introduced in my latter alterations, and is therefore liable to whatever charge of imitation it may seem to deserve, though I have not been sensible, in writing it, of having any particular class of authors in my mind.

Of the comedy that follows it I shall say but little. To those who are chiefly accustomed, in works of this kind, to admire quick turns of thought, pointed expression, witty repartee, and the ludicrous display of the transient passing follies and fashions of the world, this play will have but few attractions. The representation of a few characters, not, I believe, "over-stepping the modesty of nature," who are connected together in a very simple plot, carried on throughout with cheerfulness, unmixed with any pretensions to great refinement of sentiment, or delicate strokes of tenderness, is all this piece has to boast of: and with no higher pretensions, the greater proportion of my readers will not, I flatter myself, find fault with me for having made it a kind of division or stepping-stone between the two tragedies; where, if they do not enjoy a brilliant sunshine, they may at least have a little flickering of the sunbeams to play upon them as they pass from one sombre gloom to another. It has lain by me for many years, and has received a very few inconsiderable alterations.

The last play of this volume was written in the hope of being brought out upon our largest theatre, enriched as it then was by two actors whose noble appearance and strong powers of expression seemed to me peculiarly

* That part of the scene, Act III. in the court of the prison, where the songs of the confined chief of banditti and a slight sketch of his character are introduced, though very appropriate to the place, stands loose from the business of the play, and may therefore be considered as superfluous and contradicting what I have said above. But as it is short, and is a fancy come into my head from hearing stories in my childhood of Rob Roy, our Robin Hood of Scotland, I cannot find in my heart to blot it out, though, either on the stage or in the closet, any body is welcome to do it for me by passing it over entirely.

suited to its two principal characters. The subject of it is taken from Gibbon's account of the siege of Constantinople by the Turks. It was a subject that pressed itself upon me, at a time when I had no thoughts of writing at all, and, (if I may use the expression) *would* be written upon. The character there displayed of Constantine Paleologus, the last of the Cæsars, a modest, affectionate, domestic man; nursed in a luxurious court in habits of indulgence and indolence; without ambition; even without hope, rousing himself up on the approach of unavoidable ruin, and deserted by every Christian prince in Europe, deserted by his own worthless and enervated subjects, supported alone by a generous band, chiefly of strangers, devoting themselves to him from generous attachment;—to see him thus circumstanced, nobly fronting the storm, and perishing as became the last of a long line of kings, the last of the Romans;—this was a view of man—of noble and dignified exertion which it was impossible for me to resist, though well aware that no play I am capable of writing can ever be equal to what such a subject deserves. So much was I pleased with those generous ties—may I be permitted to make use of a scripture phrase, and say, those 'cords of a man?' binding together the noble Paleologus and his brave imperial band, that, had I followed my own inclination, delineating those would have been the principal object of the piece. But convinced that something more was requisite to interest a common audience, and give sufficient variety to the scenes, I introduced the character of Valeria, and brought forward the domestic qualities of Constantine as well as those of the unfortunate prince and beloved leader.

Mahomet and Justiniani are the only characters in the piece, Constantine excepted, that are not imaginary. The first will be found, I hope, to correspond with the character given of him by the historian. To alter, for the idle convenience of poetry, conspicuous, or indeed any characters that have been known in the world, appears to me highly blameable, though in filling up an outline given us by history we cannot well avoid heightening or diminishing the general effect. Justiniani, if I well remember, (for I have not the history by me at present to refer to,) was a noble Genoese, who, after a life distinguished for military honour, disgraced himself by being the first to turn his back when the Turks attacked the breach on the day of the last general assault, and was the immediate cause of the city being taken. He is said afterwards on this account to have died of a broken heart. I have endeavored to represent him as a proud man with a high sense of honour, rather than natively brave, and therefore particularly punctilious in every thing that concerns the reputation of a soldier. To him I have ventured to oppose a military character of a very different description, in the commander of the Genoese vessels which so gallantly forced their way into the port of Constantinople during the siege; and if I have dwelt too much on the rough generous gallantry of a brave seaman, and given too many allusions throughout the whole to the dangers and vicissitudes of a sea-faring life, my country, which has owed so much to brave men of this class, will stand forth in my defence, and say, that a Briton upon this subject writes proudly, and therefore is tempted to write profusely. In the other imaginary characters, particularly that of Othus, I have endeavored to accord with the circumstances of the times; for it is to be remembered, that slothful and corrupted as the inhabitants of Constantinople then were, amongst them were still to be found the chief remains of ancient literature and refinement*.

Perhaps in the conduct of this tragedy, I have sometimes weakened the interest of it, by attending too much to magnificence and show. But it was intended for a large theatre, where a play is rather looked at than listened to and where, indeed, by a great proportion of the audience, it cannot be heard; and though I might now very easily remove that show, yet to place in its stead what it has most probably kept back, would be almost impossible. For that which has probably been prevented by it, should have been woven and incorporated into the original texture of the piece, and cannot afterwards be inserted here and there in streaks and patches. It has also, I am inclined to believe, received some injury from my having had, when I sketched my two chief characters, the actors who I intended should represent them, too much in my thoughts. This is a fault, and I am sensible it is so: but those who have seen and admired the great powers of those actors in the highest line of tragedy, will easily admit that I have not sinned without a strong temptation. I hope also that this, standing alone, as a single offence of the kind, amongst a considerable number of plays which, if I live long enough, my present task will probably increase to, may be forgiven.

I am sensible there is not that strength and compactness of plot, that close connection of events producing one another in this play, which is a great perfection in every dramatic work, and which I am sorry to say is a perfection that is not to be found in any work of mine that I have hitherto published. However, I flatter myself I have in this instance a good excuse to make. It appears to me that, in taking the subject of a poem or play from real story, we are not warranted, even by the prerogatives of bardship, to assign imaginary causes to great public events. We

* The character of Othoric, or rather the circumstance of his death, I have taken from an account I have read somewhere, I believe in one of Dr. Moore's Novels, of a highland sergeant, who saved himself by a similar stratagem from the torments prepared for him by the American Indians.

may accompany those events with imaginary characters and circumstances of no great importance, that alter them no more in the mind of the reader than the garniture with which a painter decorates the barrenness of some well-known rock or mountain, that serves for a landmark to the inhabitants of the surrounding country. He may clothe its rugged sides with brushwood, and hang a few storm-stunted oaks on its bare peaks; he may throw a thin covering of mist on some untoward line of its acclivity, and bring into stronger light the bold storied towerings of its pillared cliffs; he may even stretch the rainbow of heaven over its gigantic head, but its large and general form must remain unaltered. To have made a romantic passion for Valeria the cause of Mahomet's besieging the city, would, I believe, have pleased the generality of readers, and have made this play appear to them more like what a play ought to be; but I must then have done what I consider as wrong.

It would be impertinent to proceed farther in pointing out the merit, if it has any, or demerit of this tragedy, of which I cannot pretend to be a very clear-sighted or impartial judge. I leave it, with its companions, to my reader, who will, I doubt not, peruse them all with reasonable indulgence, and more than this it would be foolish even to desire. If I find that, upon the whole, these plays have given more pleasure to the public than the reverse, I shall not less cheerfully bring forward, at some future time, those which remain behind, because their faults shall have been fully exposed to the censure they deserve.

RAYNER: A TRAGEDY.

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

MEN:

RAYNER.
COUNT ZATERLOO, *a worthless dissipated nobleman of ruined fortune, and chief of a band of lawless ruined men, like himself.*
BERNARD, } *Gentlemen and followers of*
SEBASTIAN, } Zaterloo.
HARDIBRAND, *an old general.*
MARDONIO, *a monk.*
Old man of the Wood.
OHIO, *a negro attached to the prison.*
HERMAN, *servant to* Rayner.
RICHARD.
BERTRAM.
GOBAS.
Keeper of the Prison, Clown, Executioners, Turnkey, Jailor, Messenger, Landlord, Confessor, Crowd, &c.

WOMEN:

ELIZABETH.
COUNTESS ZATERLOO, *mother to* Zaterloo.
MIRA, *a courtezan.*
ALICE, *friend to* Mira.

SCENE,—Germany, *near the frontiers of* Poland *and* Silesia.

ACT I.

SCENE I—A NOISE OF VOICES AND UNRULY MERRIMENT IS HEARD, WHILST THE CURTAIN DRAWS UP, AND DISCOVERS COUNT ZATERLOO, BERNARD, SEBASTIAN, AND OTHERS OF THEIR BAND SEATED ROUND A TABLE WITH WINE, &C.

Count Z. Ha! ha! ha! ha! with all this noisy mirth,
Should some grave stranger, on his way misled,
Now push the door a-jar, and look upon us
Thus set, what class of men should we be deem'd?
A set of light hearts, snug in fortune's lap,
Who will not go to bed because we may?
Or club of sharpers, flush'd with full sucess,
New from the spoiling of some simple fool?
Or troop of strolling players, at our ease,
After the labours of our kingly sorrows,
With throats new cool'd at as great charge of wine
As our tough lungs have cost of lady's tears?

Ber. No, no, thou hast not hit upon it yet:
He'd take thee for the heir of some old miser,
Treating thy friends, as first fruits of thy kingdom,
With flowing bumpers to the quiet rest
Of thy good kinsman's soul.

Count Z. Yes, Bernard, thou say'st well: and thy dark visage,
Lank and unsuited to all mirth, would mark thee
The undertaker, who amongst the guests
Had come on matters of his sable trade,
Grinning a strange, uncomely, jaw-bone smile
O'er the near prospect of his future gains.

Seb. Methinks, at least, in this gay, jolly band,
He scarcely would discover needy men,
Who better days have seen.

Count Z. Tut, man! thou art too grave; thou art too grave—
Which of you sung that song with merry lay,
Some few nights since? Come, let us have it now.

SONG.

Ye who fain would happy be,
Give the hand, and join with me:
They who toil the weary day,
They who bend with locks of grey,
They who tread the beaten way,
Fools who work that we may play,
Fold their weary arms to sleep.
Come, let us our vigil keep.

Fellows, join, and never fear;
Ye who would be happy, hear.
With the sober and the meek,
Lighter flies the passing week?
In his dwelling warm and sleek,
Brighter smiles the rich man's cheek?
Wiser things may wise men say,
But we are wiser far than they.

Come, light spirits, light and free,
Wiser they who foolish be.
He who hammers at the pot,
He who brews for every sot,
He who made my hose and coat,
Is a better man I wot;
Yet were we form'd, events declare,
He to work, and I to wear.

Mistress of the misty shroud,
O, lovely moon! come from thy cloud.
When thou o'erlook'st the ocean's brine,
Ourselves we view in floods of wine.
Our constancy resembles thine;
Like thee in borrow'd robes we shine;
Then let us, in thy kindred light,
Still wake, the rulers of the night.

Count Z. It is a song of Halbert's, is it not?
He was a social jolly-hearted mate,
And had a knack of making ready rhymes.

Ber. I knew him well: what has become of him?

Count Z. (*pretending not to hear.*) Fill up your glass, and let the flask go round.
Ber. What has become of Halbert, dost thou know?
Count Z. (*still pretending not to hear.*) This wine is richly flavour'd, is it not?
Ber. It is.—But Halbert; know ye aught of him?
Count Z. The devil take thy question, asking spirit!
For when thou get'st a notion by the skirt,
Thou, like an English bull-dog, keep'st thy hold,
And wilt not let it go.—
He shot himself in prison some months since:
Now, there's thine answer for thee; art thou satisfied?
(*A deep and long pause; then* Zaterloo *starts up as if he recollected something.*)
He will be with us ere I've pav'd his way.
Seb. Hast thou some new associate to propose?
Count Z. Know ye the younger branch of Valvo's house?
Whose valiant father left him but his sword
And his proud spirit, thro' this changeful world
To shape his way, with heart as truly tempered
To all the softest witch'ries of refinement
As e're own'd cherish'd heir of wide domains,
In palace nurs'd.
Seb. I've seen him when a youth.
But he since then has of a foreign state
The soldier been; and had not now returned,
But in the hope, 'tis said, of being heir
To his great uncle's vast and rich possessions,
Of which that villain Hubert has depriv'd him
With treach'rous wiles. Poor heart! he has my pity.
'Tis said a ling'ring fever seiz'd upon him
From disappointment; and I marvel not;
The stroke was most severe.
Count Z. And felt more keenly,
For that he left behind him, in the country
To which he now belongs, a gentle maid
And his betroth'd, with whom he thought to share
His promis'd wealth.
But these things rest.—Thus driven as we are
To this uncertain, daring course of life,
The stronger and the more respectable
Our band, the greater chance of prospering.
Our number is too small; and, by my soul,
To see a mean, plebeian, vulgar knave,
Admitted of our fellowship, still rubs
Against my nature. Such a man as Rayner
Is precious, and, once gain'd, is sure and steadfast.
But few days since I met him, dark and thoughtful,
With melancholy and unwonted gait
Slow saunt'ring thro' lone unfrequented paths
Like one whose soul from man's observing eye
Shrinks gall'd, as shrinks the member newly torn
From every slightest touch. Seeing him thus,
I mark'd him for my man.
Ber. Did'st thou accost him?
Count Z. Yes; when to my greeting,
"Thou see'st I am unhappy, go thy ways,"
He fretful said, and turn'd. I still persisted,
With soothing words which thrill'd against his heart,
(For in our youthful days we once were play-mates,)
Like the sweet tones of some forgotten song,
Till, like a pent-up flood swoln to the height,
He pour'd his griefs into my breast with tears,
Such as the manliest men in their cross'd lives
Are sometimes forc'd to shed.
Seb. And spoke he of his love?
Count Z. Nay, there indeed
He was reserv'd; but that part of his story,
Which I from sure authority have learnt,
I still thro' broken words could shrewdly read,
Altho' he nam'd it not.
Ber. Hast thou explain'd to him our course of life?
Count Z. No, that had been too much: but can'st thou doubt,
Suff'ring such wrongs as Hubert's artful baseness
Has put upon him, he will scruple long,
Thus circumstanc'd, to join his arm with ours
In murd'ring the rich villain?
Ber. (*looking at* Sebastian, *who shrinks back.*)
I pray thee call it shooting! that plain word
Still makes Sebastian, like a squeamish dame,
Shrink and look lily-fac'd. To shoot a man
As one in battle shoots a fronted foe;
As from the tavern's broil, in measur'd field,
One shoots a friend, is nought:—but that word murder—
It hath a horrid sound; pray thee, good captain,
Remember 'tis a band of gentlemen
Thou dost command, and let such gentle phrase
Fall from thy tongue as gentle ears may suit.
(*Omnes laughing loud at Sebastian.*)
Count Z. Hush! Rayner is at hand, I hear his steps.

Enter RAYNER.

I give you welcome, Rayner, with my heart:
These are my friends, of whom I well might boast,
But that it seems like boasting of myself.
Here, take your place, and join our fellowship.
There is but little need of ceremony
With those whom like misfortunes bring together.
Ray. I take my seat, honour'd in such a place;
And so far to misfortune am indebted,
Which has procur'd it for me. (*Sits down.*)

Ber. (*drinking to* Rayner.) This do I fill to future fellowship:
To that which makes, at fortune's lowest ebb,
A few brave men united, mock the world
And all its good boy rules; enabling them
Boldly to seize their portion of life's feast,
Which griping av'rice or unjust oppression
Would from them snatch, whilst with insulting scorn
It mocks their poverty and patient want.
Ray. Thou truly say'st; at least I have observ'd
That those who bear misfortunes over meekly
Do but persuade mankind that they and want
Are all too fitly match'd to be disjoin'd,
And so to it they leave them.
Ber. 'Tis ever so:
Even good men then neglect them; but the base,
They, who by mean and undermining arts
To o'ergrown wealth attain, like the ass's heel
'Gainst the sick lion's low and lanken breast
Spurn at them.
Count Z. Yes, good Bernard, thou speak'st truly.
For I myself, who, as thou know'st right well,
Am not too meekly to misfortune bent,
Have somewhat of the worthless ass's kick
Against my bosom felt.—'Lone and unarm'd,
Had but one brave companion by my side
My anger shar'd, full dearly had the knave—
But let it pass—he had a brave man's curse,
And that will rest upon him.
Ber. But, pray thee, Count, tell us the circumstance:
Thou speak'st in mystery.
Count Z. A few days since, returning near my home,
Upon a narrow path rais'd from a road
With mud choak'd up, behind me trampling came
A band of liv'ried rascals at his heels,
In all his awkward state, a puff'd-up worldling,
And rode me off my way; whilst looking back,
He turned his head with a malicious grin
At the poor spatter'd wretch, who in the mud
Stood showering curses on him.
Ray. Ay, 'tis the cursed insolence of wealth
That makes the poor man poor. Thou wert unarm'd?
Count Z. I was; or by this hand, poor as I am,
I should have spent a brace of bullets on him
With much good-will.
Ray. Know'st thou the villain's name?
Count Z. Faith, I'm almost asham'd to tell it thee.
Thou know'st him well: he is a rich man now;
His name is Hubert.
Ray. There lives no blacker villain on the earth
Than him who bears it.—But thou know'st it all.
When from a distant country, where with honour
I earn'd a soldier's pittance, the fair promises
Of a near kinsman tempted me, and I,
Tho' by my nature most incautious,
And little skill'd to gain by flatt'ring arts
An old man's love, high in his favour stood;
That villain Hubert rous'd his jealous nature
With artful tales of flights and heir-like wishes,
And side-long mock'ry of his feebleness,
Till, in the bitterness of changed love,
All his vast wealth he did bequeath to him,
And left me here, ev'n in this stranger's land,
(For years of absence makes it so to me,)
A disappointed, friendless, unknown man,
Poor and depressed, such as you see me now.
Ber. Double, detested, cruel-hearted villain!
Count Z. (*starting up with affected vehemence.*) By heaven, he dies, as I do wear this arm! (*they all start up.*)
Defended by a host of liv'ried knaves,
I'd seek him out alone.
Ber. Thou shalt not go alone; here, heart and hand
We will all join thee in so good a cause.
First Gent. My arm is at thy will.
Second Gent. Take my aid too;
We never can be bold in better cause.
Third Gent. (*on receiving a sign from Zaterloo.*) Then, Sirs, you must be speedy with your vengeance,
For I am well inform'd that on to-morrow,
With all his treasure, for a distant province
He will begin his journey towards eve.
Count Z. Ha! then good fortune leads him to our hands;
How goes he guarded?
Third Gent. With a slender train.
Count Z. Then thanks to fortune's fav'ring smiles, which thus,
Whilst we but seek revenge for a friend's wrongs,
So kindly throws into our heedless way
The easy cure of our necessities.
Yes, let us seize the greedy glutted villain!
Let us disgorge him of his ill-got gains!
He long enough has rioted in ease,
Whilst better men have felt the gripe of want.
Ber. Yes, let it be so, let the villain die!
Count Z. What say'st thou, Rayner? thou alone art silent.
Ray. The wrongs are mine, and if with indignation
They fill your breasts, in strong desire of vengeance,
Ye well may guess I am not far behind:
But there's a law above all human bonds,
Which damps the eager beating of my heart,
And says, "do thou no murder."

Count Z. Well, clear thy knitted brows, nor look thus strangely.
We both are form'd, my friend, to know like feelings,
Like wants and wishes, and from better days
Both are reduced to fortune's lowest ebb:
And I as well as thou, standing thus singly,
Can feed my fancy up with strong conceits
Of what in letter'd lore is virtue term'd;
And bear its darkest frowns. There was a time,
When sharing ev'ry wish and ev'ry view
With one of weaker frame and softer soul;
Yet forced by the dark frowns of adverse fortune
To live a willing outlaw from her presence,
Because I could not bear to come before her
A poor despised man, reft of that comeliness
And honest grace which independence gives,
To bid her throw aside her flowing robes
And decent ornaments of maiden pride,
Unveil the sweetness of her shelter'd beauty
To beating mid-day heats and chilling winds,
And be a wand'ring vagrant by my side;—
There was a time, my friend, when, thus beset,
At view of any means to better fortune,
A stronger pow'r had ris'n within my breast
And mock'd at law. But, standing thus alone,
I can as well as thou forego the gain
Which this occasion offers.—Let it pass!
There is within us, be it superstition,
Th' unscann'd opinions from our childhood cherish'd,
Or natural instinct, still a strong aversion
To ev'ry act of blood. Let us yield to it,
We will not strain our nature from its bent:
We'll do no violent deed.

Ray. (*catching hold of* Zaterloo *with great agitation.*) O thou hast mov'd me! thou hast conjur'd thought!
Wert thou—Wert thou indeed thus circumstanc'd?
And thy deserted love; what was her fate?

Count Z. She felt not long the cruel separation:
One lovely bush of the pale virgin thorn,
Bent o'er a little heap of lowly turf,
Is all the sad memorial of her worth;
All that remains to mark where she is laid.

Ray. Oh! Oh! and was it thus?

Count Z. But let us now shake off these dismal thoughts;
This hour was meant for social fellowship:
Resume your seats, my friends, and, gentle Rayner,
Clear up thy cloudy brows and take thy place.

Ray. I fain would be excus'd.

Count Z. (*gently forcing him to sit down.*) Nay, no excuse:
Thou must perforce a social hour or two
Spend with us. To ye all, my noble friends,
I fill this cup. (*drinks.*)
——————Bernard, how goes thy suit?
Hast thou yet to thy greedy Lawyer's pocket
Convey'd thy hindmost ducat? Ha, ha, ha!
Had he, with arms in hand, ta'en from thee boldly
Half of the sum, thou would'st have call'd him robber.
Ha, ha, ha! (*laughing heartily.*)

Ber. Yes, thou may'st laugh:
We nice distinctions make.—I had an uncle,
Who once upon a time————

Count Z. I hope, good Bernard,
Thy story will be shorter than thy suit.

(Rayner, *who has been sitting in gloomy thoughtfulness, without attending to any thing around him, whilst* Zaterloo *has been keeping an eye of observation on him, now rises up in great agitation to go away.*)

Count Z. What is the matter, Rayner?

Ray. I am disturb'd—I know not how I am—
Let me take leave, I pray you.

Count Z. Thou shalt not quit us thus. What is the matter?

Ray. Question me not: my thoughts are all confus'd:
There is a strong temptation fasten'd on me.
I am not well.

Count Z. (*aside to* Bernard.) Ay, now it works upon him:
This will do————
(*Aloud and preventing* Rayner *from going.*)
If thou'rt unwell, art thou not with thy friends?

Ray. If ye indeed are friends, not spirits enleagu'd
To force me to my ruin, let me go—
Let me go to my home.

Count Z. What, dost thou call a bare unfurnish'd chamber,
With griping Landlord clam'ring in thine ears
For what he knows thou canst not give, thy home?

Ray. (*sighing deeply.*) I have no other.

Count Z. Stay thou here with us:
In the next chamber thou shalt rest a while.
Lead him, my kind Sebastian, by the hand:
There is a sort of woman's kindliness
About thy nature which befits thee best
To be a sick man's friend. I'll follow you.

[Exit Rayner, *leaning on* Sebastian, *turning about to his friends triumphantly as they go off.*

I have secur'd my man.

(*A voice heard without.*)

But hark! a voice without! It is my mother's.
Secure the lattic'd door. Plague on her kindness
To haunt me here! I have forgot my promise.
(*To* Bernard.) Make fast the lattic'd door and answer for me.

Bernard (*after fastening a door of lattice work through which the* Countess *is seen.*)
Who's there? what want ye?

Countess Z. (*without.*) I want my son:
I pray you is he here?

Ber. He is not here.

Countess Z. (*without.*) Nay, say not so, I think he is with you.

O tell him I have sat these three long hours,
Counting the weary beatings of the clock,
Which slowly portion'd out the promis'd time
That brought him not to bless me with his sight.
If he is well, why does he thus forget?
And if he is not, as I fear he is not,
Tell me the worst, and let me be with him,
To smooth his couch and raise his sickly head.

Count Z. (*aside to* Bernard.) Tell her it is unseemly for a mother
To run about like a new foolish wife.

Ber. If you complain thus movingly, fair widow,
We shall believe you seek a second husband
In lieu of your good son; and by my truth
It were a better errand.

Countess Z. O base of thought, as most unblest of speech!
My son is not with you: it cannot be:
I did him wrong to seek him in such company.

Bernard (*speaking loud after her as she retires from the door.*)
Not far from hence, there is a nightly meeting
Of worthy, sober, well-dispos'd folks,
Who once a week do offer up their prayers
And chant most saintly hymns till morning dawn:
It is more likely you will find him there.
(Omnes *laughing.*)

Count Z. She's gone.

Ber. Yes, yes; come from thy hiding-place.

Count Z. Now what a most unreasonable woman!
Thinks she, thus ripen'd to these manly years,
That I must run whene'er my finger aches
To lean my silly head upon her lap?
'Tis well I have no wife.

Ber. Ay, so it is.
There is no pleasing those high legal dames,
With endless claims upon a man's regard:
Heaven save us from them all!

Count Z. Well, this I drink to precious liberty:
He is a fool indeed who parts with that.
(*A loud voice and bustling heard without.*)
What's this comes next to plague us?

Ber. 'Tis Mira's voice.

Count Z. Hast thou not sent to say, that urgent bus'ness
Detains me from her banquet?

Ber. I have; I sent to her a written message.

Count Z. Keep fast the door, and I will stand conceal'd.
(*Conceals himself, and* Mira *appears thro' the latticed door.*)

Mira (*without.*) Where is Count Zaterloo? Let me pass on.

Ber. Affairs of greatest consequence detain him,
My beauteous Mira; and I needs must say
That now you may not pass.——
He's much concern'd; early upon the morrow
He will be with you.

Mira. Upon the morrow! prate not thus to me!
He shall to-night go with me where I list,
Or never see my face again. To-morrow!
Open the door, I say! this weakly barrier
Shall not oppose my way.
(*Beating violently against the door.*)

Count Z. (*aside to* Bernard.) Faith I believe we must e'en let her in:
She may do some rash thing, if we persist.
(Bernard *unbolts the door:* Zaterloo *comes from his concealment; and enter* Mira, *superbly dress'd, and in a violent passion.*)

Mira. Is this the way you keep your promises?
Is this your faith? is this your gallantry?

Count Z. Mira, my gentle love, I pray thee hear me!
I sent to tell thee bus'ness of great moment.

Mira. Yes, yes! I have receiv'd your scurvy message,
And well I know that ev'ry paltry matter
Is cause sufficient for neglecting me.

Count Z. Thou know'st to be from thee is painful to me.

Mira. So it should seem, by taking so much care
To comfort ye the while.
(*pointing to the wine, &c.*)
You do your bus'ness jovially, methinks.

Count Z. Thou art too warm: accuse me as thou wilt
Of aught but want of love.

Mira. O thou deceitful man! I know thee well:
Thou talk'st of love, and thou wouldst break my heart.

Count Z. Indeed I am to blame, my gentle love;
Yet be not thus: in token of forgiveness
This friendly cup receive, and smile upon me.
(*Offering her a cup, which she dashes to the ground.*)

Mira. Off with thy hateful gifts! nought from thy hands
Will I receive; I scorn thy offering.
Ev'n the rich robe thou hast so often promis'd me:
Ay and so oft forgot, so I must call it,
I would now scorn, since thou dost slight my love.

Count Z. Indeed, my Mira, thou shalt have that robe
Before two days be past, I swear to thee.
Then do not look so frowningly, my love;
I know thou hast a soft relenting nature;
Smile my forgiveness.

Mira. O thou provoking man! thou know'st full well
It is thyself and not thy gifts I prize:
Thou know'st too well how my fond doting heart
Is moved with the soft witch'ry of thy tongue;
Yet thou wilt vex me thus, and break my heart.
Oh! 'tis too much! (*pretending to burst into tears.*)

Count Z. I cannot see thee weep: what would'st thou have?

Mira. I will have nought, unless you go with me.

Count Z. I cannot now, for I have urgent bus'ness.

Mira. Then stay, and never see my face again.
O that some friendly hand would end my days,
Since I have lived to see me thus despis'd.

Count Z. (*aside to* Bernard.) Bernard, I think I must e'en go with her.
See thou to Rayner: I will soon return.
(*Aloud.*) Then let us go, my love, thou dost compel me.
Thy hand, sweet Mira. (Exeunt Zaterloo *and* Mira.

Ber. Well, gentle friends, it is blest liberty
Our noble chief enjoys. I must to Rayner.
Stay if you will, and keep ye merry here.

(*Omnes.*) No, we are tir'd, we will retire to rest. [Exeunt.

Scene II.—rayner's lodgings.

Enter Rayner alone.

Ray. Be still, ye idle thoughts that toss me thus,
Changing like restless waves, but ever dark;
Or one of you above his fellows rise,
And bear a steady rule. Adversity!
Tho'st come upon me like an ambush'd foe
In armed strength. If I had mark'd thy course,
I might have girt myself for thine approach,
While distant still, and met thee like a man.
But when new-fetter'd in a lover's bonds,
And dazzled too with hope's deceitful brightness,
Cam'st thou like a thick cloud of desart sand,
And in dark night o'erwhelm'd me: deepest night,
Thro' which no waking vision ever gleams,
Save thy grim visage only, loathly want,
In all thy varied forms of misery.
My night, my day dreams, ah! how are ye changed,
Since in the new-betroth'd, the lover's fancy,
Ye wove your sheeny maze of mingled thoughts,
Like sparkling dew-webs in the early Sun!
(*after a pause.*)
Elizabeth! methinks ev'n now I see her,
As in the horrors of my last night's dream,
When, after following her thro' flood and fire,
She turn'd to me, and her weak arms stretch'd forth.
But ah! how changed, how pale, and spent, and keen!
As if already blighting poverty,
That portion which her love must share with me,
Had marr'd—cease, cease, base thought, it shall not be!

(Enter Herman with a knapsack on his back, as if prepared for a journey.)

What, my good Herman, art thou so soon ready?

Her. Yes, my dear master, but if you think it too soon, I will not go to-day. Nay, if it were not that you force me to go, I should as soon have thought of deserting my friend, (pardon my boldness, sir,) in a wild wood amongst savages, as leaving you here in this strange place in the state you are in at present. Pardon my boldness, sir.

Ray. Thou hast no boldness to pardon, Herman: thou art well entitled to call thyself my friend; there is not one amongst those who have borne that name, who would have done more for me than thou hast done.

Her. Ah sir!

Ray. (*assuming a look of cheerfulness.*) Fy, do not look so sadly upon me, man; thanks to thy good nursing and the good broth thou hast made me, I am getting strong again: and as for the state of my coffers, for which thou so much concernest thyself, do not let that disturb thee. My tide of means is, to be sure, pretty well ebb'd just now; but some wind or other will spring up to set it a flowing again. In the mean time thou knowest I would travel alone: perhaps I may ramble about a little while mysteriously, like the wandering Jew, or some of those lonely philosophers which thy old stories tell thee about, and there is no knowing what I may find out to do me good. The philosopher's stone, thou knowest, may as well fall into my hands as those of any other wanderer; so pray thee, man, don't look so ruefully upon me.

Her. Ah, my dear master! there is something here that hangs heavy on my heart, and says, if I leave you now, some evil will befal you; I beseech you let me stay with you: I shall find something to do in this town, and I can ——

Ray. No, no, no! Speak of this no more —we have argued this point already. And what is this which thou puttest down so slyly upon the table? (*taking up a little packet which* Herman *has put secretly upon the table.*) Ha! the jewels I have given thee in room of thy wages! out upon it! thou wilt make me angry with thee now, and it grieves me to be angry with thee. Put it up, put it up: I command thee to do it; and thou knowest I have not often used this stern word.

Her. O no, sir! You have not indeed used it; and I shall never meet with another master like you.

Ray. Thou wilt meet, I hope, my dear Herman, with a far better master than I have been to thee, though not with one for whom thou wilt do so much kindly service as thou hast done for me; and for this cause, perhaps, thou wilt not love him so much. God prosper thee for it, wherever thou goest!—Take this embrace and blessing for all thou hast done for me. Farewell! farewell! thou must be gone now; indeed thou must. God bless thee, my good Herman.

(*Pushing* Herman *gently off the stage, who*

wipes his eyes and seems unwilling to go.)
[Exit Herman.

Ray. (*alone.*) Now am I left alone: there's no one near me
That e'er hath loved or cared for me. Methinks
I now can better look i'th' surly face
Mine alter'd state, and bare to be in want.
I am alone, and I am glad of it.
Alas! chang'd heart of mine! what is that state
Which gives to thee such thoughts?—Elizabeth—
At it again! This strong idea still!
I am distracted when I think of this,
Therefore I must not, if I would be honest.
Those men—or are they men, or are they devils?
With whom I met last night; they've fasten'd on me
Fell thoughts, which, tho' I spurn them, haunt me still.
Would I had never met them!
Here comes my landlord with his surly face
Of debts and claims, and ev'ry irksome thing.

(Enter Landlord with a letter.)

Good morrow, Landlord.

Land. I thank you, sir; I am glad to hear you call me Landlord, for I began to be afraid you had mistaken me for your Host.

Ray. I understand you well enough, and indeed I have proved your patience, or rather your impatience, much longer than I wished. You have a letter in your hand.

Land. (*giving it.*) There, sir; if it bring you the news of any good luck, I shall be glad of it.

Ray. (*agitated.*) From Elizabeth.—Good morning—good morning to you

Land. Read it, sir, and see if it bring you any good news; it is time now to look for some change in your favour.

Ray. I cannot open it whilst thou art here. Have the goodness at least not to stand so near me.

Land. So I must not occupy a place in my own house, forsooth, for fear of offending the good folks who do me the honour to live in it. (*retires to the bottom of the stage muttering to himself.*)

Ray. (*after opening the letter with great emotion and reading it.*) O what is this!——
Abandon'd by the friend with whom she liv'd,
And coming here to join me with all speed!
O God! O God! (*sinks down upon a chair in violent agitation.*)

Land. (*running up to him.*) What is the matter now?

Ray. Begone, begone! I cannot answer thee.

Enter Count Zaterloo.

Count. Z. Ha, Rayner! how is't with thee? thou look'st wildly.
(*To* Landlord.) Speak to me, friend: he heeds not what I say:

Has any new misfortune happen'd to him?

Land. I fear there has, sir.

Count Z. Rouse thee up, brave Rayner,
A friend is come to thee.

Ray. (*starting up.*) Ha, is it thee?
Com'st thou upon me now, my tempter? now,
Ev'n in my very moment of distraction?
Thou know'st thy time: some fiend has whisper'd to thee.
Ay, ay! say what thou wilt.

Count Z. Thou'rt surely mad; I came not, on my word,
To say aught to thee which an honest ear
Might not receive: nor will I even speak,
Since it so moves thee——

Ray. (*interrupting him eagerly.*) Ah, but thou must!
Thou must speak that, which, in its darkest hour,
Push'd to extremity, 'midst ringing dizziness
The ear of desperation doth receive,
And I must listen to it.

Count Z. What, say'st thou so? 'Tis well (*aside,*) but be more prudent,
We are o'erheard. (*looking suspiciously to* Landlord, *who has retired a few paces behind.*)
Come with me to my lodgings;
There wait my friends; all things shall be concerted:
Come with me instantly; the time is precious.

Ray. (*in a tone of despair, clasping his hands vehemently.*) Ay, ay! I'll go with thee.

[Exeunt Count Zaterloo *and* Rayner.

Manet Landlord.

Land. (*coming forward.*) What's this I've overheard? Is this devil now going to tempt the poor distressed young man to do some foul deed in his necessity?—I have tempted him too, with my hard-hearted murmuring about the few wretched pounds that he owes me. I'll run after him and say, I don't care whether he pay me or not. (*running to the door and then stopping short.*) No, no! softly, softly! I dare say it is only some sharping business they have got on hand, such as needy Gentlemen are sometimes forced to follow: I have got my conscience newly cleared off at confession last week, and I am to make an offering next holy-day to the shrine of our patron St. Bernard; this is no time, goodsooth, to lose such a sum upon scruples. [Exit.

ACT II.

Scene I.—A wood; dark night, with a pale gleam of distant lightning seen once or twice on the edge of the horizon. Advancing by the bottom of the stage, a few moving lights, as if from lanthorns, are seen, and at the same time several signal calls and

LOUD WHISTLES ARE HEARD, WITH THE DISTANT ANSWER RETURNED TO THEM FROM ANOTHER PART OF THE WOOD.

Enter COUNT ZATERLOO, RAYNER, SEBASTIAN, and others of the band, armed, and a few of them bearing in their hands dark lanthorns. (It is particularly requested if this play should ever be acted, that no light may be permitted upon the stage but that which proceeds from the lanthorns only.)

Count Z. (*to* Sebastian.) They must be near: didst thou not hear their call?
Seb. Methought I did; but who in this wild wood
May credit give to either eye or ear?
How oft we've been deceiv'd with our own voices,
From rocky precipice or hollow cave,
'Midst the confused sound of rustling leaves,
And creaking boughs, and cries of nightly birds,
Returning seeming answer!
Count. Z. Rayner, where standest thou?
Ray. Here, on thy left.
Count Z. Surely these wild scenes have depriv'd thy tongue
Of speech. Let's hear thy voice's sound, good man,
To say thou art alive. Thou'rt marvellous silent:
Didst thou not also hear them?
Ray. I know not truly if I did. Around me,
All seems like the dark mingled mimicry
Of fev'rish sleep; in which the half-doubting mind,
Wilder'd and weary, with a deep-drawn breath,
Says to itself, "Shall I not wake?"
Count Z. Fy, man!
Wilt thou not keep thy soldier's spirit up?
To-morrow's sun will be thy waking time,
And thou wilt wake a rich man and a free.
Ray. My waking time!—no, no! I must sleep on,
And have no waking.
Count Z. Ha! does thy mind misgive thee on the brink?
Ray. What passes in my mind, to thee is nothing,
If my hand do the work that's fasten'd on me.
Let's pass to it as quickly as thou wilt,
And do not speak to me.——

Enter BERNARD and others, armed, &c.

Count Z. Well met, my friends! well met! for we despair'd
Of ever seeing you.
Seb. Yet we have heard your voices many times,
Now calling us on this side, now on that,
As tho' you had from place to place still skipp'd,
Like will o'the Wisp, to lose us on our way.
Ber. We've far'd alike: so have we thought of you.
Count Z. Have you discover'd aught of those we seek?
Ber. No; all is still, as far as we have travers'd:
No gleaming torch gives notice from afar,
Nor trampling hoofs sound on the distant road.
Count Z. Then must we take again our sev'ral routs,
That haply we may learn, ere he approach,
What strength we have to face, and how he travels:
And that we may not wander thus again,
This aged oak shall be our meeting place;
Where having join'd, we'll by a shorter compass
Attack them near the centre of the wood.
Seb. The night grows wond'rous dark: deep-swelling gusts
And sultry stillness take the rule by turns;
Whilst o'er our heads the black and heavy clouds
Roll slowly on. This surely bodes a storm.
Count Z. I hope the devil will raise no tempest now,
To save this child of his, and from his journey
Make him turn back, crossing our fortunes.
Ber. Fear not!
For, be the tempest of the devil's raising,
It will do thee no harm. To his good favour
Thou hast (wrong not thy merit) claims too strong.
Count Z. Then come on, friends, and I shall be your warrant!
Growl sky and earth and air, ne'er trouble ye;
They are secure who have a friend at court.
[EXEUNT.

SCENE II.—A DIFFERENT PART OF THE WOOD, WILD AND SAVAGE: THE SCENE STILL DARKEN'D, AND A STORM OF THUNDER AND LIGHTNING, ACCOMPANIED WITH HAIL.

Enter RAYNER.

Ray. I know not where these men have shelter'd them.
I've miss'd their signal: this loud stunning din
Devours all other sounds. Where shall I go?
Athwart this arch of deep embodied darkness,
Swift shiv'ring lightnings glare, from end to end
Mantling the welkin o'er in wild flames;
Or from aloft, like sheeted cataracts
Of liquid fire, seem pour'd. Ev'n o'er my head
The soft and misty-textur'd clouds seem chang'd
To piles of harden'd rocks, which from their base,
Like the up-breaking of a ruin'd world,
Are hurl'd with force tremendous. Patt'ring hail
Beats on my shrinking form with spiteful pith:
Where shall I shelter me? Ha! thro' the trees
Peers, near at hand, a small but settled light:
I will make quickly towards it; perhaps
There may be some lone dwelling in the wood.
[EXIT.

Scene III.—THE INSIDE OF A CAVE: AN OLD MAN DISCOVER'D SITTING BY A SMALL TABLE MADE OF COARSE PLANKS WITH A LAMP BURNING DIMLY UPON IT: THE THUNDER HEARD STILL VERY LOUD.

Old Man. Doth angry heav'n still roll its loudest peal
O'er th' unblest head? Ay, thro' its deaf'ning roar
I hear the blood-avenging Spirit's voice,
And, as each furious turmoil spends its strength,
Still sounds upon the far-receding storm
Their distant growl.
'Tis hell that sends its fire and devils up
To lord it in the air. The very wind,
Rising in fitful eddies, horribly sounds,
Like bursts of damn'd howlings from beneath.
Is this a storm of nature's elements?
O, no, no, no! the blood-avenging spirits
Ride on the madding clouds: there is no place,
Not in the wildest den, wherein may rest
The unblest head. (*Knocking heard without.*)
———Ha! knocking at my door!
(*Pauses and listens much alarmed: knocking heard still louder.*)
Say, who art thou that knock'st so furiously?
Think'st thou the clouds are sparing of their din,
That thou must thunder too? Say who thou art,
And what thou would'st at such an hour as this,
In such a place?

Ray. (*without.*) I am a lone, and tempest-beaten traveller,
Who humbly begs a shelter from the night.

Old Man. Then art thou come where guest yet never enter'd.

Ray. (*without.*) I do not ask admittance as a guest.
Would'st thou not save a creature from destruction,
Ev'n a dumb animal? unbar the door,
And let me lay my body under shelter.
(Old man *makes no answer; the storm heard very loud.*)

Ray. (*without.*) If thou'rt a man in nature as in voice,
Thou canst not sit at peace beneath thy roof,
And shut a stranger out to the rude night.
I would, so circumstanced, have shelter'd thee.

Old Man. He tries to move me with a soothing voice. (*Aside.*)
(*Aloud.*) Thou art a knave; I will not let thee in.

Ray. (*without.*) Belike I am, yet do not fear my wiles:
All men are honest in a night like this.

Old Man. Then I will let thee in: whoe'er thou art,
Thou hast some sense, shouldst thou lack better things.

(*He unbars a small door, and* Rayner *enters much ruffled and exhausted by the storm, and without his hat.*

Ray. I'm much beholden to thee.

Old Man. No, thou art not.

Ray. The violence of the night must plead my pardon,
For breaking thus unask'd upon your rest.
But wand'ring from my way, I know not how,
And losing my companions on the road,
Deep in the 'tangled wood the storm o'ertook me:
When, spying thro' the trees this glimm'ring lamp,
And judging it, as now it doth appear,
The mid night taper of some holy man,
Such as do oft in dreary wilds like this
Hold their abode, I ventur'd onwards.
(Old Man, *offering him bread and dried fruits.*)

Old Man. Perhaps thou'rt hungry.

Ray. I thank you gratefully.

Old Man. There is no need.
Fall to, if thou hast any mind to it.

Ray. I thank you truly, but I am not hungry.

Old Man. Perhaps thou'rt dainty: I've naught else to give thee.

Ray. I should despise myself, if any food
Could bear such value in my estimation,
As that it should to me a straw's worth seem,
To feed on homeliest, or on richest fare.

Old Man. So much the better. (*They sit down.*)

Ray. If I may guess from all I see around me,
The luxuries and follies of the world
Have long been banish d here
(Old Man *looks sternly at* Rayner, *who looks fixedly upon him again, and both remain for some time silent.*)

Old Man. Why look'st thou so?
What is there in my face that thou would'st scan?
I'm old and live alone: what would'st thou know?

Ray. I crave your pardon, and repress all wishes
That may disturb you.

Old Man. The night wears on, let us both go to rest.

Ray. I thank you, for in truth I'm very tir'd.

Old Man. (*pointing to his couch.*)
There is thy place.

Ray. Nay, I am young; the ground shall be my couch.
I will not take your bed.
(Old Man *then gives* Rayner *a cloak, which he wraps about him, laying himself down in a corner of the cave. The storm now heard at a distance. After walking up and down for some time, the* Old Man *goes close up to* Rayner, *who appears asleep, and looks earnestly upon him;* Rayner *opening his eyes seems surprised.*)

Old Man. Be not afraid, I will not cut thy throat.

Ray. (*starting half up from the ground.*)
Nay, Heaven such deed forfend! I fear thee not:
I can defend myself. (*Grasping his sword.*)

Old Man. Be not offended; but methought thy looks
Did seem as tho' thou wert afraid of me.
Rest thou in peace—rest thou in peace, young man:
I would not do thee harm for many worlds.

(Rayner *goes to rest again, still keeping his drawn sword in his hand. The* Old Man *goes to rest likewise, but shortly after starts from his couch in great agitation.*)

Old Man. It is mine hour of horror: 'tis upon me!
I hear th' approaching sound of feet unearthly:
I feel the pent-up vapour's chilly breath
Burst from the yawning vault:—It is at hand.
(*Turning towards the door as if he saw some one enter.*)
Ha! com'st thou still in white and sheeted weeds,
With hand thus pointing to thy bloody side?
Thy grave is deep enough in hallow'd ground!
Why com'st thou ever on my midnight rest?
What dost thou want? If thou hast power, as seeming,
Stretch forth thine arm and take my life;—then free
From fleshly fears, in nature as thyself,
I'll follow thee to hell, and there abide
The searing flames: but here, upon this earth,
Is placed between the living and the dead
An awful mystery of separation,
Which makes their meeting frightful and unhallow'd.

(*In the vehemence of his agitation he throws out his arm and strikes it against* Rayner, *who alarmed at his ravings has left his resting-place and stolen softly behind him.*)

Ha! what art thou? (*starting and turning round to* Rayner.)

Ray. Nay, thou with bristling locks, loose knocking joints
And fixed eyeballs starting in their sockets,
Who speak'st thus wildly to the vacant space,
Say rather, what art thou.

Old Man. I am a murderer. (Rayner *starts back from him and drops his sword.*)
Ah! wherefore dost thou stare so strangely on me?
There's no blood on me now! 'tis long since past.
Hast thou thyself no crime, that thus from me
Thou dost in horror shrink?

Ray. Most miserable man!

Old Man. Thou truly say'st, for I am most miserable.

Ray. And what am I? (*After a disturbed pause.*)
The storm did rage and bellow thro' the air,
And the red lightning shiver'd:
No traveller would venture on his way
In such a night.—O, blessed, blessed storm!
For yet it hath not been, and shall be never.
Most Great and Merciful! sav'd from this gulf,
May I to thee look up?—No: in the dust—
(*As he bows himself to the earth, and is about to kneel, the report of fire-arms is heard without, and he starts up again.*)
'Tis done!—O, it is done!—the horrible act!
[Exit, *beating his forehead violently.*

Old Man. What may this be? some band of nightly robbers
Is near my cave, committing violent deeds.
Thy light, weak flame, shall not again betray me,
And lure unwelcome visitors. (*Puts out the lamp; and after a dark pause, enter* Count Zaterloo *supporting himself on* First Gentleman, *who bears a dark lantern, which he sets down on the ground, and fastens the door of the cave carefully behind them.*)

Count Z. I am wounded grievously: who would have thought
Of such a powerful guard of armed men
Attending on his journey. He is slain:
Did'st thou not see him fall?

First Gent. Yes; we have kill'd our bird, but lost the eggs.
Fortune has play'd us false, yet we've escap'd:
Here we may rest; this cave is tenanted
With some lone being whom we may controul,
And take possession—— (*discovering* Old Man.)
——————Something living here!
What art thou?

Old Man. I am a thing no better than yourselves.

First Gent. The better then for thee that thou art so.

Count Z. Conduct me onward: I perceive an opening
Which leads, I guess, to some more close recess;
Lay me down there, for I am very faint.

First Gent. I will obey thee.—Come thou too, old man;
Not from my sight one moment must thou budge.
Come on: for, mark me well, should'st thou betray us,
Tho' fetter'd down with chains in grated dungeons,
Our arms were long enough to reach to thee.
[Exeunt.

Scene IV.—ANOTHER PART OF THE WOOD; AT A DISTANCE, ON THE BACK GROUND, ARE DISCOVERED TWO MEN WATCHING A DEAD BODY BY THE LIGHT OF A TORCH STUCK BETWEEN THE BOUGHS OF A TREE; THE STAGE OTHERWISE PERFECTLY DARK.

Enter Gobas on the front of the stage.

Gobas. I fear they will all escape from us amongst these 'tangled paths and vile perplexing thickets. A man cannot get on half a dozen paces here but some cursed clawing thing catches hold of him, and when he turns round to collar his enemy, with a good hearty curse in his mouth, it is nothing but a thorn-bush or a briar after all. A plague upon't! I'll run no more after them, if they should never be taken.—Who's there?

Enter a Companion.

Com. What, are you here, Gobas? I thought you had been in search of the robbers.

Gobas. So I was; but what does it signify? they have all got the start of us now, and we can scarcely expect they will have the civility to wait till we come up with them.

Com. Ay, ay, Gobas, that is a lazy man's argument. Why, there was one of them seen by Bertram not five minutes since with his head uncovered, stalking strangely among the trees like a madman, and he vows he will follow the scent through every path of the wood but he will have him, either alive or dead.

Gobas. But if he be a young stout robber, he may knock Bertram on the head in the mean time, and relieve him from the obligation of keeping his vow.

Com. Never fear that: his bugle-horn is by his side, and as soon as he comes up with him he will give his companions notice, and they will run to his assistance.

Gobas. Well, well, let them manage it the best way they can, and let us join our friends yonder, who keep watch by the body; there is good store of dried sticks in that corner; we may make a fire and warm ourselves till they return. (*Horn heard without.*)

Com. Ha! there is the signal, and close at hand too. He has caught his man and wants assistance; let us run to him, or the villain will escape.

(Exeunt Companion *and* Gobas, *who follows rather unwillingly, whilst the men who were watching the body run eagerly to the front of the stage.*)

First Man. It sounded to the right hand of us; let us strike into this path. (*Horn sounds again.*)

Second Man. Ay, there it sounds again; it is to this hand of us, but it is so dark there is no finding our way.

First Man. We have been so long by the torch-light that the darkness is darker to us; run back and fetch the light with thee.

(*Several other attendants from different parts of the wood run across the stage, calling to one another with great eagerness, whilst the* Second Man *running back again to the bottom of the stage, snatches the torch from the tree, and comes forward with it.*

Enter Bertram, Gobas, and others, with Rayner as their prisoner.)

Gobas. (*speaking as they enter.*) Here is light! here is light, friends! bring him near it, I pray you, that we may see what kind of a fish we have caught in our net. Ay, just as I said now, as hang'd a looking villain as ever scowl'd thro' the grates of a dungeon.—See what a wild murderous look he has with his eyes! this is the very man that did the deed, I warrant ye. Let us pull the cords faster round his arms tho': if he get one of his mischievous hands loose again, there is no knowing which of our brains he may knock out first.

First Man. It will never be thine, I am sure, thou'rt always safe when the knocking out of brains is going on.

Gobas. As I'm a sinner he'll get one of his hands loose if we do not take care of him. (*Attempting to tighten the cords round* Rayner's *arms.*)

Ber. (*putting him away with indignation.*) For shame, man, he is bound tight enough; I will not suffer thee to lay a finger upon him: and as for the hang'd face thou talk'st of, a lack a day! it goes to my heart to see him, such a goodly-looking gentleman, for such I'll be sworn he is.

Gobas. Ay, no doubt! it is ever thus with thee. Thou did'st never in thy life see a thief go to the gallows without crying out, "alack a day! what a fine looking fellow it is!" Ay, and if he could but make shift to howl out half a verse of a psalm along with his father confessor, thou wert sure to notch him down upon thy holiday tables as one of the new made saints. Ay, there be no such great saints now-a-days as those who pass, with the help of a Dominican, thro' the hangman's hands to the other world; he beats your pope and your cardinals all to nothing in smuggling a sinner cleverly in by the back door to heaven.

Ber. So much the better for thee; it is the only chance thou hast of ever getting there. Stand off, I say (*pushing* Gobas *away.*) and do not stare thus upon the prisoner! art thou not asham'd to stare in an unhappy man's face after this fashion? we don't know what hard fate may have brought him into these circumstances. (*to the attendants.*) Move on; we are losing time here.

Gobas. What, will you not pinion him more closely?

Ber. No, beast! I would rather flea the skin off that fool's back of thine than gall a hair's breadth of his body. (*in a softened voice to* Rayner.) Speak, Sir, if the rope hurts your arms; we will not use you cruelly.

Ray. What did'st thou say to me? was there kindness in thy voice?

Ber. Yes, Sir, there was kindness in it.—Do the ropes hurt your arms? if they do, we will loosen them a little.

Ray. I wist not that my arms were bound: but if thou hast any kindness in thee, give me a drink of water when thou can'st get it, for my mouth is very parched.

Ber. Yes, Sir, that you shall not want, tho'

I should pay gold for it.—Move on, comrades: the night is far advanced, and we must guard the dead body of our master and the prisoner back to the city before the morning break. [Exeunt

ACT III.

Scene.—A spacious court with a magnificent building in front a great concourse of people are discovered as if waiting in expectation of some sight.

First Crowd. The court is marvellously long of breaking up; I'm tir'd of waiting; and yet I don't like to lose the sight, after having stay'd so long for it.

Second Crowd. I fear it will go hard with the young man.

Third Crowd. I fear it will, poor gentleman!

Woman Crowd. Ah! poor young man! it is an awful end.

Second Crowd. Ay, I remember well the last criminal that was condemned here; a strong-built man he was, tho' somewhat up in years. O, how pale he look'd as they led him out from court! I think I stood upon this very spot as he passed by me; and the fixed strong look of his features too—It was a piteous sight!

Third Crowd. Ah, man! but that was nothing to the execution. I paid half a dollar for a place near the scaffold; and it would have made any body's heart drop blood to have seen him when he lifted up the handkerchief from his eyes, and took his last look of the day-light, and all the living creatures about him.

Second Crowd. Ay, man, that a human creature should be thus thrust out of the world by human creatures like himself; it is a piteous thing!

Enter a Man from the court.

Om. (*eagerly.*) What news? what news of the prisoner?

Man. He has just finished his defence, in which he has acquitted himself so nobly, setting off his words too with such a manly grace, that it is thought by every body he will be set free.

Second Crowd. Indeed! I should not have expected this now; spoke so nobly, say'st thou?

First Crowd. Yes, yes, noble blood makes noble speaking.

Woman Crowd. Well, and is it not best so? poor young man! I'm sure I'm glad of it.

First Crowd. And an't I so too, milk-fac'd doll! tho' I hate to be kept so long staring for nothing. I wonder what brought me here, in a murrain to it!

Second Woman. La! then we shan't see him pass by with the chains upon his legs.

First Crowd. No, no! nor nothing at all.—Come let me pass, I have been too long here. (*Pressing through the crowd to get out.*)

Woman Crowd. O, you tread upon my toes!

First Crowd. Devil take you and your toes both! can't you keep them out of people's way then!

Woman Crowd. Plague take it! what had we all to do to come here like so many fools!

Enter a second Man from the court.

Second Crowd. Here comes another man from the court (*calling to the man*). Ho, friend! is he acquitted yet?

Second Man. No, nor like to be; the judge is just about to pronounce sentence upon him, but something came so cold over my heart I could not stay to hear it.

(*Several of the mob climb eagerly up upon the walls of the building, and look in at the windows.*)

Crowd (*below*). What do you see there, sirs?

Crowd (*above*). The judge is just risen from his seat, and the black signal is lifted up.

Omnes. Hush! hush! and let us listen. (*A deep pause.*)

Crowd (*above*). Sentence is past now.

Crowd (*below*). God have mercy on him!

Third Crowd. I would not wear my head upon his shoulders for all the prince's coffers.

First Crowd. Alas! poor man! he is but a youth.

Second Crowd. Yet he must be cut off in the flower of his days.

First Crowd. It is an awful thing!

Woman Crowd. Ah! but a youth, and a goodly-looking youth too, I warrant ye.

Second Woman. Alack a-day! many a one falls into crimes, but all do not pay the forfeit.

Third Crowd. Ha! who comes this way so fair and so gentle in her mein; thus toss'd and 'tangled amidst the pressing crowd, like a stalk of wild flower in a bed of nettles? Come, clear the way there, and let the lady pass.

Enter Elizabeth attended by Richard, the crowd making way for her.

Eliz. I'm much obliged to you.

Richard. We thank you, good Sirs! My mistress and I are both strangers in this town, and the nearest way to your best inn, as we are told, is thro' this court; but the crowd is so great I think we had better turn back again.

Eliz. What is the meaning of this eager multitude, so gather'd round the entry to this palace?

Third Crowd. It is no palace, madam, but a public court: there is a gentleman of noble birth who is just now condemned to death for murder, and we are waiting to see him led forth from his trial; you had better stop a little while and see the sight too.

Eliz. O, no! I'm come here in an evil

hour!—A gentleman of noble birth—Alas! but that the crime is murder 'twere most piteous.

Omnes (eagerly). There he comes! see, see! there he comes!

Enter RAYNER, fettered and guarded from the court, followed by BERTRAM and others, and advances slowly towards the front of the stage, the crowd opening and making a lane for him on every side.

First Crowd. What a noble gait he has even in his shackles!

Second Crowd. Oh! oh! that such a man should come to this!

Eliz. (after gazing eagerly at the distant prisoner).
Merciful Heaven! the form has strong resemblance.

Richard. Sweet mistress, be not terrified with forms;
Tis but a distant form.

Eliz. Ha! then it strikes thee too!—Merciful God!

Richard. Patience, dear madam! now as he advances,
We shall be certified of the deception.
Rayner is not so tall as this young man,
Nor of a make so slender; no, nor yet——

Eliz. Peace, peace! for he advances. (*Watching the prisoner as he advances with a countenance of distracted eagerness, till he comes near her; then, uttering a loud shriek, falls down, and is supported by* Richard *and several of the crowd.*)

Officer (conducting Rayner). What fainting maid is this obstructs the way?
Let not the crowd so closely press around her.
Open the way, and let the pris'ner pass.

Rayner (upon the crowd opening and discovering Elizabeth).
O, sight of misery! my Elizabeth!
The last and fellest stroke of angry Heaven
Falls on this cursed head.

Officer. What may this mean? let us pass on: we stop not
Whate'er betide.

Rayner. Nay, but you do: for here there is a power
Stronger than law or judgment. Give me way:
It is permitted me by every sense
Of human sympathy, were I ev'n bound
With chains tenfold enlock'd.
(*Bending over* Elizabeth.)
Thou loveliest, and thou dearest! O thou part,
Of my most inmost self! art thou thus stricken?
Falls this stroke on thee? (*Kneeling down and endeavouring to support her, but finding himself prevented by his chain.*)
Is there not strength in the soul's agony
To burst e'en bands of iron. (*Trying furiously to burst his fetters, but cannot; then with a subdued voice*)
Am I indeed a base condemned wretch,
Cut off from ev'ry claim and tie of nature?
(*Turning to the officer*)
Thou who dost wear the law's authority,
May it not be permitted for the love
Of piteous charity?—Shall strangers' hands
Whilst I am thus—O, do not let it be!

Officer. No, no! move on: it cannot be permitted.

Rayner (fiercely roused). What, say'st thou so? (*Turning to the crowd.*)
————Ye who surround me too,
Each with the form and countenance of a man,
Say ye 'tis not permitted?
To you I do stretch forth these fetter'd hands,
And call you men: O, let me not miscall you!
(*Voices from the crowd.*)
Fie, on't! unbind his hands, unbind his hands,
And we will stand his sureties.

Bertarm (stepping forward in a supplicating posture to the officer.)
Do but unbind his hands a little space,
And shoot me thro' the head if he escape.
My arm secured him; be my recompense
This one request.

Officer (to Bertram.)
Go to; thou art a brave man but a weak one.
(*To the guard*) Move on: we halt no longer.

Crowd. By all good saints we stand by the brave Bertram,
And he shall be unshackled. (*Menacingly.*)

Officer. Soldiers, present your muskets to these madmen,
And let *them* speak; the pris'ner halts no longer:
Move on. (*A tumult between the crowd and the guard, and* Rayner *is forced off the stage by the soldiers.*)

First Crowd. Shame light on such hard-hearted cruelty!

Second Crowd. If there had been but six of us with arms in our hands he durst not have put this affront upon us.

Third Crowd. But who looks to the lady? She is amongst strangers, it seems, and has only this poor old man to take care of her.

Omnes. We will take care of her then; we will take care of her: ay, and she shall be waited upon like an empress.

Second Crowd. Ay, so she shall, let the cost be what it will. I am only a poor cobler, God knows, yet I will pawn the last awl in my stall but she shall be waited upon like an empress. See! see! she begins to revive again.

Elizabeth (opening her eyes with a heavy sigh).
Is it all vanish'd? 'twas a dreadful vision!
(*Looking on the crowd around her.*)
O, no! the crowd is here still—it is real;
And he is led away—horrible! horrible!
(*Faints again, and is carried off the stage by* Richard *and the crowd.*)

SCENE II.—A SQUARE COURT, SURROUNDED ON ALL SIDES BY THE GLOOMY WALLS OF A PRISON, THE WINDOWS OF WHICH ARE NARROW AND GRATED, AND THE HEADS OF ONE OR TWO OF THE PRISONERS SEEN LOOKING RUEFULLY THROUGH THE GRATES.

Enter HARDIBRAND, and looks round him for some time without speaking.

Hard. Gloomy enough, gloomy enough in faith!
Ah! what a wond'rous mass of dreary walls,
Whose frowning sides are reft in narrow slips
As I have seen full oft some sea-worn cliff,
Pierc'd with the murky holes of savage birds.
Ah! here the birds within are clipt o' wing,
And cannot fly away.

Enter OHIO with a tankard in his hand, crossing the stage.

Holla, my friend! I pray thee not so fast;
Inform me, if thou canst, where I may find
The keeper of the prison.

Ohio. Know you what prince you speak to? saucy knave!
I'll have thee scorch'd and flead, and piece-meal torn,
If thou dost call me friend.

Hard. Good words at least; I meant thee no offence.
I see thou hast a tankard in thy hand,
And will not question thy high dignity.
Softly; here's money for thee.
(*Giving him money.*)

Ohio. Silver pieces!
He! he! he! he! hast thou got more of them?

Har. Nay, thou art greedy; answer first my question;
Tell me at which of all these gloomy doors
I needs must knock to find out the chief jailor.
Thou look'st like some fetch-carry to the prisoners;
Dost understand me?

Ohio. Ay, there's the place, go knock at yonder door.

Har. (*after knocking.*) This door is close nail'd up, and cannot open.

Ohio (*grinning maliciously, and pointing to another door.*) No, thou art wrong; it is the door hard by,
With those black portals.
(Hardibrand *knocks at the other door.*)
Knock a little louder.

Har. (*after knocking some time.*) A plague upon't! there is no one within.

Ohio (*still grinning maliciously.*) No, thou art wrong again, it is not there;
It is that door upon the other side.
(*Pointing to the opposite wall.*)

Har. What, dost thou jest with me, malicious varlet?
I'll beat thee if thou tell'st me false again.

Ohio. Negroes be very stupid, master friend.

Enter the KEEPER of the Prison.

Keeper (*to* Ohio.) Thou canker-worm! thou black-envenom'd toad!
Art thou a playing thy malicious tricks?
Get from my sight, thou pitchy viper, go!
[EXIT *Ohio.*

Hardibrand. What black thing is it? it appears, methinks,
Not worth thine anger.

Keeper. That man, may't please you, Sir, was born a prince.

Hardibrand. I do not catch thy jest.

Keeper. I do not jest, I speak in sober earnest;
He is an Afric prince of royal line.

Hardibrand. What say'st thou! that poor wretch who sneaketh yonder
Upon those two black shanks?
(*Pointing off the stage.*)

Keeper. Yes, even he:
When but a youth, stol'n from his noble parents,
He for a slave was sold, and many hardships
By sea and land hath pass'd.

Hardibrand. And now to be the base thing that he is!
Well, well, proceed.

Keeper. At last a surly master brought him here,
Who, thinking him unfit for further service,
As then a fest'ring wound wore hard upon him,
With but a scanty sum to bury him,
Left him with me. He, ne'ertheless, recover'd;
And tho' full proud and sullen at the first,
Tam'd by the love of wine, which strongly tempts him,
He by degrees forgot his princely pride,
And has been long established in these walls
To carry liquor for the prisoners.
But such a cursed, spite-envenom'd toad!—

Hardibrand. Out on't! thou'st told a tale that wrings my heart.
Of royal line; born to command, and dignified
By sufferings and dangers past, which makes
The meanest man ennobled: yet behold him;
(*Pointing off the stage.*)
How by the wall he sidelong straddles on
With his base tankard!—O, the sneaking varlet!
It makes me weep to hear his piteous tale,
Yet my blood boils to run and cudgel him.
But let us on our way.

Keeper. You are a noble stranger, as I guess,
And wish to be conducted thro' the prison.
It is an ancient building of great strength,
And many strangers visit it.

Hardibrand. It is indeed a place of ancient note.
Have you at present many criminals
Within these walls?

Keeper. Our number is, thank God! respectable,
Though not what it has been in better days.

Hardibrand. In better days!—Well, do thou lead the way.

(*As they are about to go off the stage, they are*

stopped by a voice singing from one of the highest windows.)

SONG.

Sweetly dawns the early day,
Rise, my love, and come away:
Leave thy grim and grated tower,
Bounding walls, and step-dame's lower;
'Don thy weeds and come with me,
Light and happy are the free.

No fair mansion hails me lord,
Dainties smoke not on my board;
Yet full careless by my side
Shalt thou range the forest wide;
Tho' finer far the rich may be,
Light and happy are the free.

Har. Alas, poor soul! I would that thou wert free!
What weary thrall is this that sings so sweetly?

Keeper A restless, daring outlaw;
A fellow who hath aw'd the country round,
And levied contributions like a king,
To feast his jolly mates in wood and wild;
Yea, been the very arbiter of fortune,
And as his freakish humors bit, hath lifted
At one broad sweep the churl's sav'd store to leave it
In the poor lab'rer's cot, whose hard-worn palm
Had never chuck'd a ducat 'gainst its fellow.

Har. 'Tis a brave heart! has he been long confined?
But list! he sings again.

SONG.

Light on the hanging bough we'll swing,
Or range the thicket cool,
Or sit upon the bank and sing,
Or bathe us in the pool.

Har. Poor pent up wretch! thy soul roves far from home.

SONG.

Well, good-man time, or blunt or keen,
Move thee slow or take thy leisure,
Longest day will bring its e'en,
Weary lives but run a measure.

Har. 'Tis even so, brave heart, or blunt or keen,
Thy measure has its stint.

Enter Bertram from one of the doors of the prison.

I think thou hast the air of an old soldier:
(*To* Bertram *as he is hurrying past him.*)
Such, without greeting, never pass me by.
Ha, Bertram! is it thee?

Ber. What, mine old General?

Har. Yes, and mine old soldier.
How dost thou, man? how has it far'd with thee
Since thou hast left the service?

Ber. I thank your honour; much as others find it;
I have no cause to grumble at my lot.

Har. 'Tis well, but what's the matter with thee now?
Thine eyes are red with weeping, and thy face
Looks ruefully.

Ber. I've been to visit, here, a noble youth
Who is condemn'd to die.

Har. A noble youth!

Ber. Yea, a soldier too.

Har. A soldier!

Ber. Ay, your honour, and the son
Of a most gallant soldier.

Har. But he is innocent?

Ber. He is condemn'd.

Har. Shame on it! were he twenty times condemn'd,
He's innocent as are these silver'd locks.
(*Laying his hand vehemently on his head.*)
What is his name?

Ber. Rayner.

Har. Ha! son to my old comrade, Rayner!
Out on the fools! I would as soon believe
That this right hand of mine had pilfer'd gold,
As Rayner's son had done a deed of shame.
Come, lead me back with thee, for I must see him.

Ber. Heav'n bless your honour! O, if by your means
He might have grace!

Har. Come, let us go to him.

Ber. Not now, an' please you: he is now engaged
With one most dear to him. But an hour hence
I will conduct you to his cell.

Har. So be it.
Mean time, stay thou with me, and tell me more
Of this unhappy youth: I have a mind,
With the good keeper's leave, to view the prison. [Exeunt.

Enter Mira and Alice by opposite sides, both muffled up in cloaks and their faces conceal'd.

Mira (*stopping* Alice.) Nay, glide not past me thus with muffled face:
'Tis I, a visitor to these grim walls,
On the same errand with thyself. How goes it
With our enthralled colleague? doth he promise
Silence to keep in that which touches us
Of this transaction, for the which he's bound?

Alice. He is but half persuaded; go thyself
And use thy arts—hush, here's a stranger near us.

Enter a Man who gives a letter mysteriously to Mira, and, upon her making a sign to him, retires to the bottom of the stage whilst she reads it.

What read'st thou there, I pray thee, that thy brows
Knit thus ungraciously at ev'ry line?

Mira. Know'st thou that I must doff my silken robes,
Despoil my hair of its fair ornaments,
And clothe me in a gown of palmer's grey,
With clouted shoon and pilgrim's staff in hand
To bear me o'er rude glens and dreary wastes
To share a stony couch and empty board,
All for the proving of my right true love
For one in great distress. Ha! ha! ha! ha!
So doth this letter modestly request:
I pray thee read it.

Alice (*reading the letter.*) "A deadly wound rankles in my side, and I have no skilful hand to dress it, and no kind friend to comfort me. I am laid upon the cold earth, and feel many wants I never knew before. If thou hast any love for me, and as thou hast often wish'd to prove that love, come to me quickly: but conceal thyself in the coarse weeds of a Pilgrim: my life is a forfeit to the law if any one should discover where I am. A friend in disguise will give into thy hands this letter, and conduct thee to thy miserable Zaterloo." (*returning the letter.*) And what say'st thou to this?

Mira. I have in truth, upon my hands already
Troubles enough; this is, thou know'st, no time
To take upon me ruin'd men's distresses.

Alice. But 'tis thyself hast brought this ruin on him:
'Twas thy extravagance.

Mira. Thou art a fool!
His life's a forfeit to the law: 'tis time,
Good time, in faith, I should have done with him.
Why dost thou bend these frowning looks on me?
How many in my place would for the recompense
Betray him to the officers of justice?
But, I, thou know'st right well, detest all baseness,
Therefore I will not.

Alice. Hush, hush! thou speak'st too loud:
Some one approaches.

Enter Countess Zaterloo.

Countess Z. (*to* Mira.) I pray you, Madam, pardon this intrusion;
Tracing your steps, I have made bold to follow you.
I am the mother of an only son,
Who for these many days I have not seen:
I know right well naught is conceal'd from you,
Of what concerns him; let me know, I pray you,
Where I may find my child.

Mira. Madam, you speak to one who in his secrets
Has small concern.

Countess Z. Nay, now, I pray you, do not keep it from me:
I come not with a parent's stern rebuke:
Do tell me where he is, for love of grace:
Or, if you will not, say if he is sick,
Or if he is distress'd with any want.
Do, for love's sake! I have no child but him.

Mira. (*giving her the letter.*) There, Madam; this is all I know of him.
'Twas yonder stranger gave it to my hand;
(*Pointing to the man.*)
We need not interrupt you with our presence;
And so good day. [Exeunt Mira *and* Alice.

Countess Z. (*after reading the letter.*) Alas, my son! and art thou low and wounded?
Stretch'd on the cold ground of thy hiding place
In want and fear? Oh art thou come to this!
Thou who didst smile in thy fair op'ning morn,
As cherubs smile who point the way to heaven.
And would'st thou have a stranger come to thee?
Alas! alas! where can thy aching head
So softly rest as on a parent's lap?
Yes, I will wrap me in the pilgrim's weeds,
Nor storm nor rugged wild shall bar my way.
And tho' declining years impair my strength,
These arms shall yet support thy feeble frame,
When fairer friends desert thee.
(*To the* Messenger, *beckoning him to come forward.*)
Good friend, this is no place to question thee!
Come with me to my home. [Exeunt.

ACT IV.

Scene I.—The inside of the prison: Rayner and Elizabeth are discovered sitting sorrowfully by one another in earnest discourse.

Ray. Thou sayest well, my sweet Elizabeth;
In this I have against thy love offended.
But in the brightness of fair days, in all
The careless gaiety of unruffled youth,
Smiling like others of thy sex, I loved thee;
Nor knew that thou wert also form'd to strive
With the braced firmness of unyielding virtue
In the dark storms of life—alike to flourish
In sunshine or in shade.—Alas! alas!
It was the thoughts of seeing thee—but cease!
The die is cast; I'll speak of it no more:
The gleam which shews to me thy wond'rous excellence
Glares also on the dark and lowering path
That must our way divide.

Eliz. O no! as are our hearts, one is our way,
And cannot be divided. Strong affection
Contends with all things, and o'ercometh all things.
I will unto thee cling with strength so terrible,
That human hands the hold will ne'er unlock.

Ray. Alas, my love! these are thy words of woe,
And have no meaning but to speak thy woe:
Dark fate hangs o'er us, and we needs must part.
The strong affection that o'ercometh all things,
Shall fight for us indeed, and shall o'ercome:
But in a better world the vantage lies
Which it shall gain for us; here, from this earth
We must take different roads and climb to it,
As in some pitiless storm two 'nighted travellers
Lose on a wild'ring heath their 'tangled way,
And meet again.

Eliz. Ay, but thy way, thy way, my gentle Rayner—
It is a terrible one.
Oh flesh and blood shrinks from the horrid pass!
Death comes to thee, not as he visiteth
The sick man's bed, pillow'd with weeping friends:
O no! nor yet as on the battle's field
He meets the blood-warm'd soldier in his mail,
Greeting him proudly.—Thou must bend thy neck,
This neck round which mine arms now circled close
Do feel the loving warmth of youthful life;
Thou must beneath the stroke—O horrid! horrid!

Ray. (*supporting her from sinking to the ground.*) My dear Elizabeth, my most belov'd!
Thou art affrighted with a horrid picture
By thine own fancy trac'd; look not upon it:
All is not dreadful in the actual proof
Which on th' approach frowns darkly. Rouse thy spirit;
And be not unto me at this dark push
My heaviest let, thou who should'st be my stay. (*She groans heavily.*)
What means that heavy groan? I'll speak its meaning,
And say, that thou to nature's weakness hast
The tribute paid, and now wilt rouse thyself
To meet with noble firmness what perforce
Must be; and to a lorn and luckless man,
Who holds in this wide world but thou alone,
Prove a firm, gen'rous, and heart-buoyant mate,
In the dark hour. Do I not speak it rightly?

Eliz. Thou dost, thou dost! if nature's weakness in me
Would yield to the heart's will.
(*Falling on his neck in a burst of sorrow.*)

Enter Father Mardonio.

Mar. My children, ye have been in woful conference
Too long: chide not my zeal that hither brings me
To break upon it. On you both be shed
Heav'n's pitying mercy!

Ray. Amen, good Father! thou dost call us children
With a most piteous and kindly voice:
Here is a daughter who in this bad world
Will yet remain to want a father's care;
Thus let me form a tie which shall be sacred;
(*Putting* Elizabeth's *hand into* Mardonio's.)
She has no parent.

Enter Keeper of the Prison.

What brings thee here? we would be left in peace.

Keeper (*to* Rayner.) I am by a right noble stranger urged,
Who says he has in many a rough campaign
Serv'd with your valiant father in the wars,
To let him have admittance to your presence.
Bertram conducts him hither.

Ray. Serv'd with mine honour'd father! and thus circumstanc'd,
Now comes to see his son! Well, be it so:
This is no time for pride to winch and rear,
And turn its back upon the patt'ring hail,
Bearing the thunder's shock. Let it e'en be:
Admit him instantly. (*Calling him back.*)
——————Nay, ere thou goest,
What is he call'd?

Keeper. The Gen'ral Hardibrand.

Ray. An honour'd name. [Exit Keeper.
Retire, my love: (*to* Elizabeth.)
I cannot bear to have thy woes exposed
Before a stranger's gaze.
(*She retires with* Mardonia *to an obscure part of the Prison at the bottom of the Stage.*)

Enter Hardibrand *and* Bertram.

Har. (*to* Bertram: *stopping short as he enters, and gazing upon* Rayner, *who is turned away from them and looking after* Elizabeth.)
It is the son of Rayner: in his form
And face, tho' thus half turn'd from us. I see
His father. Still a soldier and a gentleman
In ev'ry plight he seem'd. A clown or child
Had sworn him such clad in a woollen rug.
(*Advancing to* Rayner.)
Young soldier, I did know your gallant father;
Regard me not as an intruding stranger.

Ray. I thank you, courteous sir: in other days
Such greeting to my heart had been most welcome.
A gallant father and condemned son
May in the letter'd registers of kindred
Alliance have; but in the mind's pure record,
They no relation bear: let your brave friend
Still be to you as one who had no son.

Har. No, boy; that sentiment bespeaks thy blood.
Heed not those fetter'd hands: look in my face,
Look in my face with the full confidence

Of a brave man; for such I'll swear thou art.
Think'st thou that I am come to visit thee
In whining pity as a guilty man?
No, by the rood! if I had thought thee such,
Being the son of him whose form thou wearest,
I should have curs'd thee. Thou by mis'ry press'd,
Hast strongly tempted been: I know thy story·
Bertram has told it me: and spite of courts,
And black-rob'd judges, laws, and learn'd decisions,
I do believe it as I do my creed.
Shame on them! is all favour and respect
For brave and noble blood forgotten quite?

Ray. Ah, do not fear! they will remember that,
And nail some sable trappings to my coffin.

Har. I would that to their grave and pompous chairs
Their asses' ears were nail'd! Think they that men,
Brave men, for thou thyself—What corps I pray thee
Didst thou belong to in thy Prince's service?

Ray. The first division of his fourth brigade
Was that in which I serv'd.

Har. Thou hast companion been to no mean men.
Those six brave officers of that division,
Upon the fam'd redoubt, in his last siege,
Who did in front o' th' en'my's fiercest fire
Their daring lodgement make, must needs of course
Be known to thee.

Ray. I knew them well; five of them were my friends.

Har. And not the sixth?

Ray. He was, alas! my greatest enemy;
To him I owe these bonds.

Har. A curse light on his head, brave tho' he be!

Ray. O curse him not, for woes enough already
Rest on his wretched head.
(*Bowing low and putting his hand on his head.*)

Har. Ha! thou thyself,—thou wert thyself the sixth!
Thank heav'n for this! Then let them if they will
Upon a thousand scaffolds take thy life,
And spike thy head a thousand feet aloft;
Still will I say thy father had a son.
(*Rushing into his arms.*)
Come to my soldier's heart, thou noble bird
Of a brave nest!—Must thou indeed be pluck'd
And cast to kites? By heav'n thou shalt not die!
Shall such a man as thou art from his post
Be sham'd and push'd for one rash desp'rate act?
It shall not be, my child! it shall not be!

Ray. (*smiling.*) In faith, good Gen'ral, could your zeal prevent it,
I am not yet so tir'd of this bad world,
But I could well submit me to the change.

Har. I'll with all speed unto the Governor,
Nor be discourag'd, tho' he loudly prate
That grace and pardon will but leave at liberty
The perpetrators of such lawless deeds
To do the like again, with such poor cant.
(Elizabeth, *who has been behind backs, listening eagerly to their conversation, and stealing nearer to them by degrees in her eagerness to hear it, now rushes forward, and throws herself at* Hardibrand's *feet.*)

Eliz. We ask not liberty; we ask but life.
O grant us this, and keep us where they will,
Or as they will. We shall do no disquiet.
O let them grant us life, and we will bless them!

Ray. And would'st thou have me live, Elizabeth,
Forlorn and sad, in loathly dungeon pent,
Kept from the very use of mine own limbs,
A poor, lost, caged thing?

Eliz. Would not I live with thee? would not I cheer thee?
Would'st thou be lonely then? would'st thou be sad?
I'd clear away the dark unwholesome air,
And make a little parlour of thy cell.
With cheerful labour eke our little means,
And go abroad at times to fetch thee in
The news and passing stories of the day.
I'd read thee books: I'd sit and sing to thee:
And every thing would to our willing minds
Some observation bring to cheer our hours.
Yea, ev'n the varied voices of the wind
O' winter nights would be a play to us.
Nay, turn not from me thus, my gentle Rayner!
How many suffer the extremes of pain,
Ay, lop their limbs away, in lowest plight
Few years to spend upon a weary couch,
With scarce a friend their sickly draughts to mingle!
And dost thou grudge to spend thy life with me?

Ray. I could live with thee in a pitchy mine;
In the cleft crevice of a savage den,
Where coils the snake, and bats and owlets roost,
And cheerful light of day no entrance finds.
But would'st thou have me live degraded also;
Humbled and low? No, liberty or naught
Must be our boon.

Har. And thou shalt have it too, my noble youth:
Thou hast upon thy side a better advocate
Than these grey hairs of mine.
(*To* Elizabeth.)
Bless that fair face! it was not made for nothing.
We'll have our boon; such as befits th[illegible]
No, hang them if we stoop to halving it!
(*Taking her eagerly by the hand.*)
Come with me quickly; let us lose no time:

Angel from heaven thou art, and with heav'ns power
Thou'lt plead and wilt prevail.

Ray. In truth thou wilt expose thyself, my love,
And draw some new misfortune on thy head.
(*Endeavouring to draw her away from* Hardibrand.)

Eliz. (*to* Hardibrand.)
What new misfortune? can they kill thee twice?
We're tardy: O move quickly! lose no time.

Har. Yes, come, and Bertram here will guide our way:
His heart is in the cause.

Bert. Yes, heart and soul, my Gen'ral. Would my zeal
Could now make some amends for what those hands
Against him have unwittingly committed.
O that the fellest pains had shrunk their nerves
Ere I had seiz'd upon him!

Ray. Cease, good Bertram!
Cease to upbraid thyself. Thou didst thy duty
Like a brave man, and thou art in my mind
Not he who seiz'd but he whose gen'rous pity
Did, in my fallen state, first shew me kindness. (Bertram *kisses his hand.*)
Go, go! they wait for thee.

Bert. They shall not wait. Would that we were return'd,
Bearing good tidings!

Har. O fear it not, my heart says that we shall.

[Exeunt Elizabeth, Hardibrand *and* Bertram, *Manent* Rayner *and* Mardonio.]

Mar. Hope oft, my son, unbraces the girt mind,
And to the conflict turns it loosely forth,
Weak and divided. I'm disturb'd for thee.

Ray. I thank thee, Father, but the crime of blood
Your governor hath ne'er yet pardon'd; therefore
Be not disturb'd for me; my hopes are small.

Mar. So much the better. Now to pious thoughts
We will direct—Who comes to interrupt us?

Enter Turnkey.

Ray. It is the turnkey; a poor man who, tho'
His state in life favours not the kind growth
Of soft affections, has shewn kindness to me.
He wears upon his face the awkwardness
And hesitating look of one who comes
To ask some favour; send him not away.
(*To* Turnkey). What dost thou want, good friend? out with it, man!
We are not very stern.

Turn. Please you, it has to me long been a priv'lege
To shew the curious peasantry and boors,
Who from the country flock o' holy days,
Thro' his strait prison bars, the famous robber,
That over-head is cell'd; and now a company
Waits here without to see him, but he's sullen,
And will not shew himself. If it might please you
But for a moment opposite your grate
To stand, without great wrong to any one,
You might pass for him, and do me great kindness.
Or the good Father there, if he be willing
To doff his cowl and turn him to the light,
He hath a good thick beard, and a stern eye,
That would be better still.

Ray. (*laughing.*) Ha! ha! ha! what say ye to it, Father?
(*Laughing again more violently than at first.*)

Mar. (*turning out the* Turnkey *in a passion, and returning sternly to* Rayner.)
What means this wild and most unnatural mirth?
This lightness of the soul, strange and unsuited
To thy unhappy state? it shocks me much.
Approaching death brings naught to scare the good,
Yet has it wherewithal to awe the boldest.
And there are seasons when the lightest soul
Is call'd on to look inward on itself
In awful seriousness.

Ray. Thou dost me wrong; indeed thou dost me wrong.
I laugh'd, but.. faith! I am not light of soul:
And he who most misfortune's scourge hath felt
Will tell thee laughter is the child of mis'ry.
Ere sin brought wretchedness into the world,
The soberness of undisturbed bliss
Held even empire o'er the minds of men,
Like steady sunshine of a cloudless sky.
But when she came, then came the roaring storm,
Lowering and dark; wild, changeful, and perturb'd;
Whilst thro' the rent clouds oft times shot the gleam
More bright and powerful for the gloom around it.
E'en midst the savage strife of warring passions,
Distorted and fantastic, laughter came,
Hasty and keen, like wild-fire in the night;
And wretches learnt to catch the fitful thought
That swells with antic and uneasy mirth
The hollow care-lined cheek. I pray thee pardon!
I am not light of soul.
Death is to me an awful thing; nay, Father,
I fear to die. And were it in my power,
By suffering of the keenest racking pains,
To keep upon me still these weeds of nature,
I could such things endure, that thou would'st marvel,
And cross thyself to see such coward-bravery.
For oh! it goes against the mind of man
To be turn'd out from its warm wonted home,
Ere yet one rent admits the winter's chill.

Mar. Come to my breast, my son! thou hast subdued me. (*Embracing him.*)
And now we will lift up our thoughts to him
Who hath in mercy saved thy hands from blood.

Ray. Yes, in great mercy, for the which I'd bow
In truer thankfulness, my good Mardonio,
Ev'n with these fears of nature on my mind,
Than for the blessing of my spared life,
Were it now proffer'd me.

(*They retire into the obscurity of the dungeon, at the bottom of the stage, and the* Scene *closes on them.*)

SCENE II.—A SMALL APARTMENT IN A SOLITARY COTTAGE IN THE COUNTRY:

Enter COUNT ZATERLOO, supported by an attendant and followed by the COUNTESS in the disguise of a PILGRIM; both of them wearing masks. She places a pillow for his head on a couch or sick chair, and he is placed upon it, apparently with pain.

Countess Z.(*to* Attendant.) There, set him gently down; this will support him.
(*To* Count Zaterloo.) How art thou now? I fear thou'rt very faint
After so long a journey.
(*To* Attendant.) We have no farther need of thine assistance:
Thou wilt retire, but be upon the watch.
[EXIT Attendant.

Count Z. (*unmasking.*) Now, charming Mira, lay disguise aside;
Speak thine own natural voice, and be thyself:
There is no eye to look upon us now;
No more excuse for this mysteriousness.
Let me now look upon thy face and bless it!
Thou hast done well by me: thou'rt wond'rous gentle.
I knew thee fair and charming, but I knew not
Thou wert of such a soft and kindly nature.

(*The* Countess *unmasks and looks at him sorrowfully.*)

Ha! mother! is it you?

Countess Z. Who should it be? where should'st thou look for kindness?
When we are sick where can we turn for succour;
When we are wretched where can we complain;
And when the world looks cold and surly on us,
Where can we go to meet a warmer eye
With such sure confidence as to a mother?
The world may scowl, acquaintance may forsake,
Friends may neglect, and lovers know a change;
But when a mother doth forsake her child,
Men lift their hands and cry, "a prodigy!"

Count Z. (*taking hold of both her hands and kissing them.*)
O mother! I have been a thankless child!
I've given thee hoary hairs before thy time;
And added weight to thy declining years,
Who should have been their stay.

Countess Z. Be calm, my son, for I do not upbraid thee.

Count Z. Wretch that I am! I was an only son,
And therefore bound by no divided tie
To be to thee thy hold and thy support.
I was a widow's son, and therefore bound
By every generous and manly tie
To be in filial duty most devoted.
O I have vilely done! I feel it now;
But if I live to be a man again,
I'll prove a better son to thee, dear mother.

Countess Z. I know thou wilt, my dearest Zaterloo;
And do not thus upbraid thyself too sharply;
I've been a foolish mother to thy youth,
But thou wilt pardon me.

Count Z. Of this no more—How came you by my letter?
If you did intercept it on its way,
Mira is faithful still.

Countess Z. It was from Mira's hand that I received it.
She toss'd it at me with a jeering smile
When I with anxious tears inquired for thee.

Count Z. (*rising half from his seat in great passion.*) O faithless, faithless woman! she it was,
Who made of me the cursed thing I am!
I've been a fool indeed and well requited.
Base, avaricious and ungrateful———oh!

(*Putting his hand on his side as if seized with sudden pain.*)

Countess Z. Such agitation suits not with thy state:
What ails thee now?

Count Z. The pain, the pain! it has return'd again
With increased violence.

Countess Z. God send thee ease! why dost thou look so wildly,
And grasp my hand so hard? What is't disturbs thee?

Count Z. My time on earth is short.

Countess Z. Nay, say not so: thou may'st recover still.
O why this seeming agony of mind?
'Tis not the pain that racks thee.

Count Z. There's blood upon my head; I am accursed.

Countess Z. Good heaven forfend! thou wand'rest in thy speech.
Thy life I know is forfeit to the law
By some unlawful act, but oh no blood!

Count Z. O for a short respite! but 'twill not be:
I feel my time is near.

Countess Z. Thou wand'rest much: there's something on thy mind,
Dark'ning thy fancy.

Count Z. 'Twas I that did it—I that murder'd him:
He who must suffer for it did it not.

Countess Z. What words are these? my blood runs cold to hear them.

Count Z. (*alarm'd.*) Be still, be still! there's some one at the door:
All round me is exposed and insecure.

Countess Zaterloo *goes to the door and receives something from a* Servant, *shutting the door immediately.*)

Countess Z. It is a servant come to fetch me something.

Count. Z. Has he not heard it? he has heard it all!
(*In violent alarm and agitation.*)

Countess Z. Be still, be still! it is impossible.
Thou'st wak'd the pain again; I see thee tremble.

Count Z. (*writhing as if in great pain.*)
Aŷ, this will master me: 'twill have me now:
What can be done? O for a short reprieve!

Countess Z. Alas, my child! what would'st thou have me do?

Count Z. I would have time turn'd backward in his course,
And what is past ne'er to have been: myself
A thing that no existence ever had.
Canst thou do this for me?

Countess Z. Alas! I cannot.

Count Z. Then cursed be thy early mother's cares!
Would thou had'st lifted up my infant form
And dash'd it on the stones! I had not liv'd,
I had not lived to curse thee for thy pains.

Countess Z. And dost thou curse me then?

Count Z. (*soften'd.*) O no! I do not!
I did not curse thee, mother: was it so?

Countess Z. No, no, thou didst not; yet I have deserv'd—
I was a mother selfish in my fondness;
And with indulgence, senseless and extreme,
Blasted the goodly promise of thy youth.

Count Z. (*rising half up alarm'd from his couch.*) Hark! there's a noise again! hast thou more servants
Coming with errands to thee?—We're discover'd!

Countess Z. Be not so soon alarm'd: it is impossible.

Count Z. Is there an inner chamber? lead me there; (*Pointing to a door.*)
I cannot rest in this. (*stopping short eagerly as she is leading him out with great difficulty.*)
——————Thine absence haply
From thine own house, suspicion may create:
Return to it again, and thro' the day
Live there as thou art wont; by fall of eve
Thoul't come to me again.—I'm very weak;
I must lean hard upon thee.

[Exit, *looking suspiciously behind him as if he heard a noise, and supported with great difficulty by his mother.*

Scene III.—The Countess Zaterloo's House.

Enter Countess and a Female Attendant.

Attendant. Ah! wherefore, madam, are you thus disturb'd
Pacing from room to room with restless change,
And turning still a keen and anxious ear
To every noise? What can I do for you?

Countess Z. Cease, cease! thou canst do nothing, my good girl:
I have a cause, but do not seek to know it.

Enter a Servant.

Ser. There is a stranger——

Countess Z. (*starting with alarm.*) Ha! what dost thou say?
A stranger! what appearance does he wear?
Is there but one? Looks he suspiciously?

Ser. Be not alarmed, madam; 'tis a woman.

Countess Z. (*feigning composure.*) Thou art a fool to think I am alarm'd:
Or man or woman, whosoe'er it be,
I am unwell, and must not be disturb'd.

Ser. It is a lady of distinguish'd mein,
Tho' much in grief, and she so earnestly
Pleads for admittance that I am compell'd—
Pardon me, madam; but to look upon her
Would move your heart to pity.

Countess Z. Let her enter. [Exit Servant.
Who may this be? why do I tremble thus?
In grief!—the wretched surely will not come
In guileful seeming to betray the wretched.
(*To* Attendant.) Know'st thou who this may be?

Attendant. Indeed I do not.

Countess Z. Retire then to a distance: here she comes:
But do not leave the chamber.

(Attendant *retires to the bottom of the stage, and enter* Elizabeth *with her hair and dress disordered, like one distracted with grief.*)

Eliz. Madam, I come a stranger to your presence,
By misery embolden'd, and urg'd on
By desperation. In your pity only
Lives all the hope of my most wretched state:
O kill it not! push me not to the brink
Of misery so deep and terrible!
Have pity! O have pity on my woe!
Thou art a woman, and a woman's heart
Will not be shut against a wretched woman.

Countess Z. What would'st thou ask? thou dost with too much grief
Conceal the point and object of thy suit.

Eliz. There is in prison bound, condemn'd to die,
And for a crime by others hands committed,
A noble youth, and my betrothed love:
Your son—O shrink not back, nor look so sternly!
Your son, as secret rumour hath inform'd me,
Mortally wounded and with little hope
Of life, can ample testimony give,
Being himself of those who did the deed,
That Rayner did it not:—O let him then,
In whate'er secret place he lies conceal'd,
In pity let him true confession make;
And we will bless him—Heav'n will pardon him!

Countess Z. Despair hath made thee mad! art thou aware
What thou dost ask of me? Go to our governors;
They may have pity on thee; but from me
It were an act against the sense of nature.

Eliz. Nay, say not so! I have for mercy sued
At the proud feet of power, and been rejected:
What injury can reach a dying man?
Can his few hours of breathing poise the scales
'Gainst the whole term of a man's reckon'd life
In youth's best strength?

Countess Z. Go, thou hast been deceiv'd with a false tale:
And, were it true, hope ends not but with life;
Heaven only knows who is a dying man.

Eliz. For blessed charity close not your pity
Against all other feelings but your own!
(*Clasping the* Countess' *knees and kissing her hand.*)
Sweet lady! gentle lady! dearest lady!
O be not ruthless to a soul bow'd down
In extreme wretchedness!

Countess Z. Cease, cease! unlock thy hold: embrace me not!
Has he for whom thou plead'st from out o' thyself
Received his being? press'd with infant lips
Thy yearning bosom? smiled upon thy knees,
And bless'd thine ear with his first voice of words?
Away, away! despair has made thee mad,
That thus thou hang'st upon me.

Eliz. O he for whom I plead is to my soul
Its soul: is to my fancy its bound world,
In which it lives and moves; all else beyond
Darkness, annihilation. O have pity!
For well thou say'st, despair has made me mad.

Countess Z. Let go, let go! thou with a tigress striv'st,
Defending her bay'd whelp: I have no pity.
Heav'n will have pity on thee! let me go;
Unlock thy desp'rate hold.
(*Breaks from her and runs out, and* Elizabeth, *quite overcome, sinks upon the ground, the* Attendant *rushing forward from the bottom of the stage to support her.*)

Enter Father Mardonio.

Mar. (*raising her.*) My daughter, heav'n will send in its good time
The aid that is appointed for thy state.
Contend no more, but to its righteous will
Submit thyself. Let me conduct thee hence.
[Exeunt Mardonio *and* Attendant *supporting her. Re-enter the* Countess, *looking fearfully round her as she enters.*

Countess Z. She is gone now: thank God that she is gone!
There is a horrid conflict in my mind.
What shall I do? I strongly am beset.
I will go quickly to some holy man,
And ghostly counsel ask.
[Exit, *crossing the stage with a quick irresolute step, sometimes stopping to consider, and then hurrying on again.*

ACT V.

Scene I.—A spacious outer room in the prison.

Enter an Under-Jailor and a Clown.

Clown. I pray thee now, my good friend, here is a piece of money for thee—very good money too; thou may'st look o' both sides of it an' thou wilt: it has been wrapped up in the foot of my old holiday stockings since last Michaelmas twelvemonth, and neither sun nor wind has blown upon it. Take it, man, thou art heartily welcome to it if thou canst put me into a good place near the scaffold; or a place where I may see him upon the scaffold; for I am five and thirty years old next Shrove-Tuesday when the time comes round, and I have never yet seen in all my born days so much as a thief set i' the stocks.

Jail. Poor man! thou hast lived in most deplorable ignorance indeed. But stand aside a little, here is the famous executioner of Olmutz a-coming, who has been sent for expressly to do the job; for our own is but a titulary hangman; he has all the honours of the office, but little experience in the duties of it.

Clown. O dickens, I'll creep into a corner then, and have a good look of him. A man that has cut off men's heads, save us all! he must have a strange bloody look about him for certain.

Enter two Executioners, speaking as they enter.

First Ex. What! no execution in this town for these ten years past? Lord pity you all for a set of poor devils indeed! Why I have known a smaller town than this keep ye up a first executioner for the capital business, with a second man under him for your petty cart-tail and pillory work; ay, and keep them handsomely employed too. No execution in such a town as this for these ten years past! one might as well live amongst the savages.

Second Ex. It is a pitiful thing to be sure, but don't despise us altogether, Mr. Master: we shall improve by and by, please God; and here is a fair beginning for it too, if the Lord prosper us.

First Ex. Ay, thou wilt, perhaps, have the honour of hanging a thief or two before thou art the age of Methuselah; but I warrant ye, the beheading of this young nobleman here by the famous executioner of Olmutz will be remembered amongst you for generations to come. It will be the grand date from which every thing will be reckoned; ay, your very

grand children will boast that their fathers were present at the sight.

Second Ex. I make no doubt on't, my master, but you are a very capital man in your way: Lord forbid that I should envy the greatness of any one; but I would have you to know that there have been others in the world as good as yourself ere now: my own father cut off Baron Koslam's head upon this very scaffold that we now hear them hammering at.

First Ex. Some wandering hocus-pocus Baron, I suppose, that sold nostrums for the tooth-ach. I always put such fellows into the hands of my underling to operate upon; I never count the dealing with them as your prime work, tho' for certain we must call it your head-work; ha! ha! ha! (*holding out his axe in a vain-glorious manner.*) Seest thou this axe of mine? The best blood of the country has been upon its edge: to have had one's father or brother under its stroke, let me tell thee, is equal to a patent of nobility.

Second Ex. Well, be it so: I envy no man, God be praised! tho' thou art set over my head upon this occasion. I have whipp'd, branded, and pilloried in great meekness and humility for these seven years past; but the humble shall be exalted at last, and I shall have better work to do, by and by, God willing. Let us have no more contention about it. —Who's there? (*observing* Jailor *and* Clown. Ay, Jailor, do thou go and kick up the black prince, he is snoring in some corner near us, and send him for some brandy.

(Jailor *coming forward, with the* Clown *creeping after him half afraid.*)

Jail. The black prince is no where to be found; he has not been seen since the cells were locked.

Second Ex. Go fetch us some liquor thyself then.

First Ex. But who is this sneaking behind thee, and afraid to show his face?

Jail. Only a poor countryman, a friend of mine, who wanted to look at you as you past.

First Ex. Yes, yes, every body has a curiosity to look at extraordinary persons. (*to* Clown.) Come forward, man, and don't be afraid. Did'st thou ever before see any thing better than a poor parish priest, or a scrubby lord of the village? didst thou, eh?

Clown. (*abashed.*) I don't know, please you: my brother did once stand within a team's length of the Prince of Carara, when he passed through our village on his way to Franconia.

First Ex. So then thou art not the first of thy family that has seen a great man. But don't be afraid, my good fellow, I a'nt proud nor haughty as many of them be: thou shalt even shake hands with me an' thou wilt. (*Holding out his hand to* Clown, *who shrinks from him, and puts his hands behind his back.*)

Clown. No, I thank you; I ben't much of a hand-shaker: I have got a little sore on my thumb, may it please you: I thank you all the same as tho' I did.

First Ex. Ay, thou art too mannerly to call it the thing that we wot of. Well, thou art a good sort of fellow; don't be abash'd: thou see'st I am very condescending to thee. Come, then, thou shalt drink a cup of liquor with me. Follow us into the next ward, my good friend.

Clown. (*shrinking from him again.*) O na, save your presence! I'll go with the jailor here.

First Ex. (*to* Second Executioner.) Ay, he is but a poor bashful clown, and don't know how to behave himself in good company. [Exeunt *Executioners.*

Clown. Shake hands with him, Mary preserve us! it sets the very ends of my fingers a dingling. Drink out of the same mug with him too! (*sputtering with his lips*) poh! poh! poh! the taste of raw heads and carrion is on my lips at the thoughts of it. (*To* Jailor.) Come let us go out of this place; I be long enough here. (*stepping short as he goes off.*) What noise and hammering is this we hear?

Jailor. It is the workmen putting up the scaffold.

Clown. (*starting.*) What, are we so near to it? mercy on us! let me get out of this place, for it puts me into a terrible quandary.

Jailor. If this be the mettle thou art made of, thou had'st better take thy money again, and I'll give thy place for the sight to somebody that has got a stouter heart than thou hast.

Clown. Na, na, I won't do that neither; I have a huge desire to see how a man looks when he is going to have his head cut off, and I'll stay for the sight tho' I should swoon for it. Poor man! poor man! what frightful things there be in this world when one's mind sets a thinking upon it!—Is he a tall man now, (*to* Jailor) or a short man? a pale-faced man, or——ay, pale enough, I warrant. Mercy on us! I shall think of him many a night after this before I go to sleep. Poor man! poor man! what terrible things there be in this world, if a body does but think of them. [Exeunt Clown *and* Jailor.

Scene II.—A dungeon; Rayner discovered sitting at a table by the light of a lamp, with a book in his hand; the clock from a neighbouring steeple strikes three, and he, roused with the sound, lays down the book.

Ray. This bell speaks with a deep and sullen voice:
The time comes on apace with silent speed.
Is it indeed so late? (*Looking at his watch.*)
It is even so.
(*Pausing, and looking still at the watch.*)
How soon time flies away! yet, as I watch it,
Methinks, by the slow progress of this hand,

I should have liv'd an age since yesterday,
And have an age to live. Still on it creeps,
Each little moment at another's heels,
Till hours, days, years, and ages are made up
Of such small parts as these; and men look back,
Worn and bewilder'd, wond'ring how it is.
Thou trav'llest like a ship in the wide ocean,
Which hath no bounding shore to mark its progress.
O Time! ere long I shall have done with thee.
When next thou leadest on thy nightly shades,
Tho' many a weary heart thy steps may count,
Thy midnight 'larum shall not waken me.
Then shall I be a thing, at thought of which
The roused soul swells boundless and sublime,
Or wheels in wildness of unfathom'd fears:
A thought; a consciousness; unbodied spirit.
Who but would shrink from this? It goes hard with thee,
Social connected man; it goes hard with thee
To be turned out into a state unknown,
From all thy kind, an individual being.
But wherefore shrink? came we not thus to earth?
And he who sent, prepar'd reception for us.
Ay, glorious are the things that are prepar'd,
As we believe!—yet, Heaven pardon me!
I fain would sculk beneath my wonted cov'ring,
Mean as it is.
Ah, Time! when next thou fill'st thy nightly term,
Where shall I be? Fye! fye upon thee still!
Ev'n where weak infancy, and tim'rous age,
And maiden fearfulness have gone before thee;
And where, as well as him of firmest soul,
The meanly-minded and the coward are.
Then trust thy nature, at th' approaching push,
The mind doth shape itself to its own wants,
And can bear all things. (*Rising from his seat, and walking several times backward and forward.*)
I know not how it is, I'm wond'rous heavy;
Fain would I rest a while. This weary frame
Has but a little more to do for me,
And yet it asks for rest. I'll lay me down:
It may be possible that I shall sleep,
After these weary tossings of the mind;
I feel as tho' I should. (*Goes to sleep, covering himself with a cloak.*)

Enter OHIO, creeping out from a hiding place at the bottom of the stage, and going softly up to RAYNER, looks for some time upon him with a malicious grin.

Ohio. Thou hast lov'd negroes' blood, I warrant thee.
Dost sleep? ay, they will waken thee ere long,
And cut thy head off. They'll put thee to rest;
They'll close thine eyes for thee without thy leave;
They'll bloat thy white skin for thee, lily-face.
Come, less harm will I do thee than thy fellows:
My sides are cold: a dead man needs no cloak.
(*Beginning gently to pull off* Rayner's *cloak, who starts from his sleep, and looks at him in amazement.*)

Ray. Ha! what hole of the earth hath cast thee up?
What thing art thou? and what would'st thou with me?

Ohio. My sides are cold; a dead man needs no cloak.

Ray. 'Tis true indeed, but do not strip the living.
Where dost thou run to now? where wert thou hid?

Ohio. (*after running to his hiding place, and fetching out a stick, which he presents to* Rayner.)
Beat me thyself, but do not tell of me.

Ray. I would not harm thee for a greater fault.
I'm sorry thou art cold; here is my cloak:
Thou hast said well; a dead man needs it not.
I know thee now; thou art the wretched negro
Who serves the prisoners; I have observ'd thee:
I'm sorry for thee; thou art bare enough,
And winter is at hand.

Ohio. Ha! art thou sorry that the negro's cold?
Where wert thou born who art so pitiful?
I will not take thy cloak, but I will love thee.
They shall not cut thy head off.

Ray. Go thy ways;
Go sculk within thy hiding place again,
And, when the cell is open'd, save thyself.

Ohio. They shan't cut off thy head.

Ray. Now, pray thee go.

Ohio. I'll kiss thy feet; I'll spend my blood for thee.

Ray. I do beseech thee go! there's some one coming:
I hear them at the door. (*Pushes him hastily off.*)

Enter HARDIBRAND, advancing slowly to RAYNER, his eyes cast upon the ground.

Ray. Good morrow, general: where's thy friendly hand?
Why dost thou turn thine eyes aside, and fear
To look me in the face? Is there upon it
Aught that betrays the workings of the mind
Too strongly mark'd? I will confess to thee
I've struggl'd hard, I've felt the fears of nature;
But yet I have the spirit of a man

That will uphold me: therefore, my brave friend,
Do me the grace to look upon me boldly:
I'll not disgrace thee.

Har. No, my valiant boy!
I know thou'lt not disgrace me, nor will I
Put shame on thee by wearing on this morn
A weeping face: I will be valiant too.
We will not, Rayner, tho' thou'rt thus—Oh! oh! (*Bursting into tears.*)

Ray. My gen'rous friend, my second father, why
Wilt thou oppress me thus?

Har. Bear with me, bear with me; I meant to brave it,
And I will brave it. But to thee, my son,
In thy distress, encompass'd as thou art,
My heart so strongly has enlink'd itself,
That to part from thee, boy, is ——
(*Falling on his neck, and bursting again into tears.*)

Enter Mardonio.

Mardonio. (*after looking at them for some time, and in a solemn imposing tone of voice.*)
The strength of man sinks in the hour of trial;
But there doth live a pow'r that to the battle
Girdeth the weak: Heaven's vivifying grace,
And strength, and holy confidence be thine,
Who art in mercy stricken! (*Holding up his right hand to heaven, whilst* Rayner, *approaching with reverence, bows himself beneath it very low.*)

Ray. Thanks to thee, father! these are words of power,
And I do feel their strength. Beneath that hand
Which hath in mercy stricken me, I bow;
Yea bow, the nobler and the bolder grown
For such humility.—(*Familiarly.*) How goes the time?
Does day begin to dawn?

Mar. Grey light peeps faintly o'er the eastern towers.

Ray. The time is then advanc'd; we'll husband it.
Come close to me, my friends. (*Taking* Hardibrand *and* Mardonio *each by the hand, and pressing them close to his breast.*)
Of worldly cares, upon my mind there rests
But only those which I have mention'd to you.
Yet, in this solemn hour, let me remind you:—
My poor Elizabeth ———

Har. (*eagerly.*) Thou'st said enough:
She is my child, and heiress of my lands
To the last rood.—Ah! what avails it now!

Ray. How shall a dying man find thanks for this,
Whose day is closed? I will attempt no thanks.
The other wish that closely presses on me:—
Mardonio, upon thee must hang this boon:—
That miserable man of whom I've told you;
Now living in the hell of his remorse,
Cut off from human intercourse; whose horros
And midnight vision sav'd this hand from blood:
I fain————

Har. (*again eagerly interrupting him.*)
Fear not! fear not! he shall be sav'd;
And shall with human beings yet consort
In blessed charity, if ghostly care
From holiest men procur'd, or off'rings made
To every sacred shrine on christian ground
Can give him peace.

Ray. (*smiling and pressing* Hardibrand *to his bosom.*)
With all the prompt and gen'rous profusion
Of eager youth dost thou, mine aged friend,
Take every thing upon thee. Be it so.
And good Mardonio with his sober counsel
Will aid thy bounty. Here I join your hands:
My worldly cares are clos'd.

Enter Elizabeth, followed by Richard and Bertram, who remain on the back ground whilst she comes slowly forward; Rayner turning round on hearing them enter.

Ah! who is this?
Alas! alas! it is Elizabeth.
(*Holding out his hand to her.*)
Advance, my love; thou'rt ever welcome here
How does it fare with thee?

Eliz. It is all mist and darkness with me now;
I know not how it fares with me.

Ray. Alas!
Thou gentle soul! a dark cloud o'er thee hangs,
But thro' the gloom the sun again will break,
And, in the soberness of calm remembrance,
Thou wilt look back upon misfortunes past
Like tempests that are laid. Thou dost not heed me:
Thou dost not speak to me. Alas! alas!
What shall I say to thee?
I've lov'd thee well, and would have lov'd thee long,
Had it so been—But thou shalt be belov'd!
Heaven will take charge of thee when I'm at rest:
The kindly and the good shall be thy kindred,
(*Putting her hand in* Hardibrand's.)
And ev'ry sorrowful and gentle heart
Shall knit itself to thee, and call thee sister.
(Elizabeth *makes a motion with her hand as if she would speak, and he pauses, but she is silent.*)
What meant, my love, that motion of thy hand?

Mar. She fain would speak to thee, but has no voice.

Ray. I know it well, Elizabeth; no voice
Need'st thou to tell me how thou'st dearly lov'd me,
And dearly do I prize it; 'tis my pride;
E'en humbl'd as I am, it is my pride.
Heaven's dearest blessings rest upon thy head!—

And now, since we must part, do in thy love,
Do for me this last grace; bid me farewell,
And let my earthly sorrows now be clos'd.
Heaven's blessing rest upon thee!
(*He kisses her, and she turns to go away*, Rayner *looking after her as she goes, but presently returns again.*)

Ray. Thou art return'd, my soul; what would'st thou have?

Eliz. (*in a broken voice.*) A thought—a wish did press upon my heart,
But it is gone.

Ray. I thank thee for thy wish;
It is a good one, tho' thou canst not speak it,
And it will do me good. But leave me! leave me!
Thou wilt unfit me for a task of strength.
(*Elizabeth again attempts to go away, but still returns.*)
Ah, wherefore still! wilt thou be cruel to me?

Eliz. O, no! O, no! I know not what I do:
It is all mist and darkness with me now:
I look upon thee, but I see thee not.
Let me once more but feel thy handi n mine,
And send me where ye will: my being then
Is at an end. (*They embrace again, and she still continues to hang upon him.*)

Ray. (*to* Bertram *and* Richard.)
O, lead her hence, and have some mercy on me!
My father died i' the field a valiant death,
And shall his son upon the scaffold die
O'ercome and weak, reft of that decent firmness
Which ev'n the base and vulgar there assume?
O lead her hence! in mercy lead her hence!
(Bertram *and* Richard *tear her from him, and lead her away, whilst he turns his back, and hides his face with his hands.*)

Elizabeth. (*stopping short, and tossing up her arms distractedly as they are leading her out.*)
Reprieve! reprieve! I hear a voice i' the air!
I hear it yet again!

Rayner. (*uncovering his face, and looking about eagerly, whilst* Hardibrand *rushes forward impetuously from the bottom of the stage, where he has been pacing backward and forward with hasty strides.*)
Is't any thing?

Mar. Alas no! all is silent: 'tis the fancy
Of fond distraction list'ning to itself.

Har. Nay, it was something: Bertram, thou did'st hear it?

Ber. No, I heard nothing.

Har. What, nor thou, good Richard?

Rich. No, nothing.

Elizabeth. (*holding up her arm distractedly as* Richard *and* Bertram *lead her off.*)
And is it nothing! no redemption near!
[Exeunt Elizabeth, Richard, *and* Bertram, *whilst* Rayner, *uttering a deep groan, hides his face, and* Hardibrand *returns with hasty strides to the bottom of the stage.*

Ray. (*uncovering his face.*) Is she gone now?

Mar. She is.

Ray. Thank God for it! Now to our task:
(*Stepping forward with assumed firmness.*)
What of it now remains we shall o'er-master.
Pray thee how goes the time? But pardon me!
I have too oft inquir'd how goes the time:
It is my weakness.

Mar. The morning now advances.

Ray. So I reckon'd.
We too shall put ourselves in forwardness:
And so, good father, to your ghostly guidance
I do commend myself.

Enter Jailor.

Jailor. The officers of justice are arrived,
And wait the presence of the prisoner.

Ray. They come upon us sooner than we wist;
But 'tis so much the better.
(*To* Mardonio *aside.*)
Shall we have time allow'd us for retirement,
Before they lead me forth?

Mar. 'Tis ever so allow'd.

Ray. Come then, I feel me stronger than I was:
'Twill soon be past; the work goes on apace.
(*Taking hold of* Hardibrand *and* Mardonio *as he goes out.*)
Your arm, I pray:—I know not how it is;
My head feels dizzy, but my limbs are firm.
Good Hardibrand, think'st thou I shall disgrace thee?

Har. No, by the mass! I'll give them this old carcass
To hack for crow's meat if thou shrink'st one hair's breadth
From the comportment of a gallant soldier,
And of a brave man's son.

Ray. (*smiling with a gratified look.*) I thank thee.
Methinks I now tread, as I onward move,
With more elastic and dilating step,
As if a spirit of pride within me stirr'd,
Buoying me up on the swoln billows ridge.
[Exeunt.

Scene III.—An outer garden-room or portico in the house where Zaterloo is concealed.

Enter Countess and a Confessor, with two Attendants bearing Zaterloo on a small couch, which they set down on the middle of the stage; the Attendants retire.

Countess Z. The air revives him: look, I pray thee, father,
How the fresh air revives him: say not then
All hope is banish'd quite.—Thou shak'st thy head:
But whilst I see upon his moving breast
One heave of breath, betok'ning life within,
I'll grasp at hope, and will not let it go.
(*Bending over the couch.*)

My son! my son! hear'st thou my voice, my son?

Count Z. Yes, mother: I have had a fearful struggle.
'Tis a strong enemy that grapples with me,
And I must yield to him.—O pious father!
Pray thou for mercy on me.

Countess Z. Yes, my son,
This holy man shall pray for thee; the shrines
Of holiest saints be gifted for thee; masses
And sacred hymns be chanted for thy peace:—
And thou thyself, even 'midst thine agony,
Hast spoken precious words of heav'nly grace;
Therefore be comforted.

Count Z. (*shaking his head.*) There is no comfort here: dark, veil'd, and terrible,
That which abides me; and how short a space——

Countess Z. O thou may'st yet recover!

Con. Lady, forbear! this is no time to soothe
With flatt'ring hopes: his term is near its close;
Therefore, I do again entreat it of you,
Send off the messenger with his confession,
Lest it should be too late to save the innocent,
And he be sent unto his long account
With a most heavy charge upon his head.

Countess Z. Thou mak'st me tremble.—Ho! There, you without!
Send here the messenger. (*Calling off the stage.*)
———His steed is ready:
He shall forthwith depart.

Enter Messenger.

Con. (*to* Messenger.) Take thou this packet, and with full-bent speed
Go to the city to the governor,
And see that into his own hand thou give it,
With charges that he read it instantly.
It is of precious moment to *his* life
Who on the scaffold should this morning suffer.
Quick mount thy horse: few minutes goaded speed
Will take thee to the gates.

Mes. Few minutes goaded speed, five leagues to master!

Con. Five leagues! thou'rt mad.

Mes. No, marry! know ye not
The flooded river hath last night broke down
The nearer bridge?

Con. What, art thou sure of this?

Mes. I am now come from gazing on the sight.
From bank to bank the red swoln river roars;
And on the deep and slowly-rolling mass
Of its strong centre-tide, grumly and dark,
The wrecks of cottages, whole ricks of grain,
Trunks of huge trees torn by the roots,—ay,
And floating carcasses of perish'd things,
Bloated and black, are borne along; whilst currents
Cross-set and furious, meeting adverse streams
On rude uneven surface, far beyond
The water's natural bed, do loudly war
And terrible contest hold; and swoltring eddies
With dizzy whirling fury, toss aloft
Their surgy waves i' the air, and scatter round
Their ceaseless bick'ring gleams of jagged foam,
All fiercely whit'ning in the morning light.
Crowds now are standing upon either shore
In awful silence; not a sound is heard
But the flood's awful voice, and from the city
A dismal bell heard thro' the air by starts,
Already tolling for the execution.

Con. What's to be done? fate seems to war against us.
No, no! we'll not despair! Mount thy fleet horse,
Life and death's in thy speed:——
Let naught one moment stop thee on thy way:
All things are possible to vig'rous zeal:
Life and death's in thy speed: depart! depart!
And Heaven be with thine efforts.

[Exit Messenger, *after receiving the packet.*

Count Z. Is he gone? is it done?

Con. Yes, he is gone: God grant he be in time,
For unto human reck'ning 'tis impossible!
(*To* Countess *with an upbraiding look.*)
Half an hour sooner——

Countess Z. Oh, torment me not!
Who could foresee this hind'rance?—O, good father!
Look to thy penitent. Upon his count'nance
There's something new and terrible. Speak to him:
Go close to him, good father.—O my son!

Count Z. I feel within me now—this is the feeling:
I am upon the brink, the dreadful brink:
It is a fearful gulf I have to shoot.
O yet support me! in this racking pain
I still may hold a space the grasp of life,
And keep back from the dark and horrid—Oh!
(*uttering a deep groan.*) It is upon me!

(*Struggles and expires with a faint groan.* Countess, *wringing her hands in agony of grief, is hurried off the stage by the* Confessor *and Attendants, who rush in and take hold of her.*)

Scene IV.—An open square before the great gate of the prison.

A crowd of spectators, with guards, &c., are discovered, waiting for the coming forth of Rayner to his execution, and a solemn bell is heard at intervals. The gate opens, and enter Rayner walking between Mardonio and Hardibrand, and followed by Richard and

BERTRAM, preceded and followed by guards, officers, &c. The procession moves slowly over the stage, and exeunt, followed by the greater part of the Crowd, though a good many of them still remain upon the stage. Then re-enter HARDIBRAND and RICHARD, followed by one or two of the Crowd: HARDIBRAND, walking up and down in a perturbed manner, and RICHARD leaning his back against the side-scene, where he continues motionless with his eyes fixed on the ground. The murmur of the multitude is heard for some time without, and then ceases, followed by a dead silence.

First Crowd. The sound of the multitude is still now.

Second Crowd. (*looking out.*) I fancy, by the crowd who stand all gather'd round yonder in dead silence, he is now preparing for the block.

Third Crowd. It must be so: mercy on us, what a mantle of human faces there be spread round on every side, and not one sound of voice amongst them all! (*A long pause.*)

Har. (*starting and stopping suddenly, to* First Crowd.)
Didst thou hear aught?

First Crowd. No, they are still silent.

Har. Look out, I pray thee, and tell me what thou see'st.
(First Crowd *looks out.*)
What dost thou gaze at with so broad an eye?

First Crowd. The executioner is now mounted upon the platform, and the prisoner—— O! I cannot look any more!
(*A loud confused noise is heard without.*)

Har. What's that?

Second Crowd. It is like the cry of a great multitude when they look upon something that is terrible.

First Crowd. Then the stroke is given, and it is all over now.

(Hardibrand *turns hastily away, and rushes to the other end of the stage, whilst* Richard *gives a heavy groan, and still remains motionless. A shout is heard without.*)

Har. (*returning furiously from the bottom of the stage.*)
More of that horrible din!—
May they bring down the welkin on their heads!

Second Crowd. (*to* First Crowd.) What art thou looking at now?

First Crowd. Nay, there is nothing to look at now: the platform is down, and the crowd is returning home again.

Enter OHIO, running across the stage.

Ohio. I've done it! I've done it! I've done it! [EXIT.

Enter a MESSENGER in great haste, followed by a Civil Officer.

First Crowd. Where are you running to so fast?

Mes. Is the execution over?

First Crowd. Yes, it is over.

Mes. Ah! then I am too late.

First Crowd. What mean ye by that?

Mes. I brought a pardon for him.

Har. (*rushing upon the messenger and collaring him.*)
A pardon! O confound your tardy speed!
Had you upon some paltry wager strove,
You had run faster.—O, thou cursed fool!
O had'st thou sped, I'd made a rich man of thee!

Mes. (*disentangling himself.*) My steed and I across the high-swoln ood,—
Those on the shore shrieking to see our boldness,
Have fearless swam some miles short of the pass
Which we must else have gain'd, or, by my faith,
I had been later.

Har. Thou liest, thou cursed fool! thou should'st have sped
Swift as a bullet from a cannon's mouth.
(*Collaring him again.*)

Enter RAYNER, MARDONIO, BERTRAM, and CROWD.

Mar. (*to* Hardibrand, *pulling him back from the* Messenger.)
Hold, general! what hath the poor man done?

Har. Wha thas he done? he's brought a pardon, fiend!

(*The* Crowd *gives a great shout, crying out "pardon, pardon," and* Hardibrand, *turning round at the noise, and seeing* Rayner, *springs forward, and catches him in his arms.*)
God bless us all, and let us keep our wits!
Is this true seeing that my eyes are blest with?
O welcome, welcome! this is wonderful!
My boy! my noble boy! my gallant boy!
Thou art a man again, and I—I'm mad:
My head wheels round, but 'tis a blessed madness.
What say'st thou? art thou silent?
Hast no voice?

Ray. To be upon the verge of death is awful;
And awful from that verge to be recall'd.
God bless ye! O God bless ye! I am spent;
But let me draw my breath a little while,
And I will thank you—I will—bear with me:
I cannot speak. (*Recovering himself, and seeing the Crowd gather round him with joyful and sympathizing looks.*)
Surely 'tis a kind world I have return'd to;
There's sympathy and love in ev'ry heart.

Mar. (*to* Messenger.) Where is the pardon? let me have it, friend,
That I may read it. (Messenger *gives him a paper which he reads.*)
We charge thee upon our authority to set the (*Reading the rest low to himself.*)
What! call ye this a pardon which acquits
The prisoner as guiltless of the crime?
May God be praised! how has all this been?

Mes. Count Zaterloo, who on his death-bed lies,
In deep remorse, a paper of confession,
Attested by a priest and his own mother,
Caus'd to be drawn, which to the governor
I've brought, I wot, as quickly as I might,
Tho' (*pointing to* Hardibrand) this good gentleman—

Har. (*embracing the* Messenger.) O no! O no! thou'rt a brave fellow now,
And as I've said, I'll make a rich man of thee.
But I'm bewilder'd still: how hath it been
That he is sav'd, seeing no pardon reach'd him?

Mar. Yes, thou may'st wonder! for some unknown friend
Had sawn across the main prop of the scaffold,
So that the headsman mounting first, the platform
Fell with a crash; and he, all maim'd and bruis'd,
Unfit to do his office, was perforce——

Har. Ay, ay, 'tis plain, thou need'st not tell me more.—
But he the unknown friend——

Enter OHIO, running exultingly.

Ohio. 'Twas I that did it!
Beat me and scourge me as ye list: I did it!
He offer'd me his cloak: he pitied me;
And I have paid him back.

Har. Ha! well done and well said, my brave black thing!
Art thou a prince? in faith I think thou art.
I'll take thee home, and make a man of thee.
No, no! (*pointing to* Rayner) here is my son, my heir, my child:
All that I have is his: he will reward thee.
Thou hast a gen'rous mind, altho' debas'd
With vile oppression and unmanly scorn.

Ray. (*taking* Ohio *and* Hardibrand *both by the hand.*) What shall I say to you? my heart would speak
What my voice cannot. O! and here comes one
Who mocks all power of words.

Enter ELIZABETH running, and rushes into RAYNER's arms; the crowd then eagerly gathers round them, and closes upon them.

Mar. (*stepping out from the crowd, and looking upon them.*) Yes, gather round him, kindly souls tho' rude,
In the true artless sympathy of nature;
For he is one o'er whom the storm has roll'd
In awful power, but spar'd the thunderbolt.—
When urg'd by strong temptation to the brink
Of guilt and ruin, stands the virtuous mind
With scarce a step between; all-pitying Heaven,
Severe in mercy, chast'ning in its love,
Oft times, in dark and awful visitation,
Doth interpose, and leads the wand'rer back
To the straight path, to be forever after
A firm, undaunted, onward bearing traveller,
Strong in humility, who swerves no more.

[EXEUNT.

The republication of her works being proposed in this country, Miss Baillie had the kindness to furnish in *manuscript* the following alterations of the tragedy of Rayner, which now, for the first time, appear in this edition.

ALTERATIONS
IN THE
TRAGEDY OF RAYNER,

The better to adapt it for representation.

The character of Ohio, called the Black Prince, and all that regards him to be entirely left out.

The first scene of the fifth act to be omitted.

The last scene of the Play to be altered as follows.

Scene, a large square or market-place, surrounded with buildings, the windows and roofs of which are crowded with spectators. Near the bottom of the stage, is a scaffold, &c., prepared for an execution; guards lining the sides of the square, and crowds of people seen behind them; a solemn bell is heard tolling, at intervals.—Enter Rayner, *preceded by the* Head'sman, *bearing an axe, and walking between* Hardibrand *and* Mardonio, *officers and guards following. They enter by the front of the stage.*

Ray. (*stopping and turning to* Hard.) And now, my noble friend, proceed no farther.
Here take my last farewell, my thanks, my blessing,
For all the generous love thou'st shewn to me.
Nay, leave me here, and look not on a sight
Which might disturb your days and nights to come
With hideous recollections.—Let us part.
(*Embraces* Hard. *who attempts to speak, but cannot.*)
Thy love requires no parting words, dear friend!
My heart knows all thy generous heart would utter.
Farewell! farewell, till in a better world
We meet again; and there again I'll bless thee
For all the kindness thou hast shewn me here.
(*Turning to* Bertram.)
Bertram, do thou support thy former General,
Thou'st done so bravely in far different conflicts,
And lead him quickly from this dismal spot.

(*The* Provost, *or civil officer presiding over the execution, advancing to* Rayner.) I grieve to say the hour is more than run, and we may no longer delay what the law hath decreed.

Ray. Is it so late? I thank you, Mr. Provost, for your courtesy and patience, so far.—
Lead on then; I am ready.
(*he proceeds to the scaffold, leaning on* Mardonio, *and having mounted the steps, kneels for a few moments, and then prepares for the*

block. While this is doing, Bertram *endeavours to lead* Hardibrand *away by the front of the stage.)*

Ber. You do not move, my General; you're very faint; let my arms support you; you must needs leave this spot.

Har. (*throwing his arms over the shoulders of* Bertram, *and hiding his face in his bosom.*)
I cannot move; tell me when all is over.

(*As the* Executioner *raises his axe for the stroke, a voice is heard at some distance without, calling vehemently.*)
Stop! stop the execution: life and pardon!

Ber. (*turning to the scaffold, and waving his hand.*) Ho! stop that hasty fiend! it is a pardon!

(Herman's *voice without, heard near and distinctly.*) I bring a pardon for the prisoner!

Ber. (*still supporting* Hard.) Rouse ye, my General; you are half asleep;
There is a pardon for the prisoner.

Hard. (*springing upon his feet.*) A sound from heaven! a veritable pardon!
My ears hear truly now; a blessed hearing!
(*Runs to* Rayner, *who has been released and is now descending the scaffold, amidst the acclamations of the multitude.*)
My boy, my noble boy, my gallant boy!
Thou art a man again, and I—I'm mad.
But how? thy face is paler than before.
Thou'rt pardon'd man, dost thou not catch my words?
Joy deals with thee more shrewdly than distress.

Mar. (*waving off* Herman *and others, who press near* Rayner.)
Stand off a little space, and give him air.

Ray. (*recovering himself.*) To be upon the verge of death is awful,
And awful from that verge to be recall'd!
Thank God!—And you, my friends, God bless ye all!
Yet bear with me a little while; I cannot speak.
(*Recovering more perfectly and seeing the crowd cheering him on every side.*)
Surely 'tis a kindly world I have return'd to;
There's sympathy and love in every heart.

(*The* Provost, *holding out a paper which he has received from* Herman.)
This gives free pardon to the prisoner,
Who is declared guiltless of the crime,—
The bloody act for which he was condemned,
On the confession of the wretched man,
That was its perpetrator.—

Her. (*now going close to* Rayner.) Yes, my dear master! Providence is just.
Count Zaterloo, who on his death bed lies
In deep remorse, a paper of confession,
By his own Mother and a Priest attested,
Caused to be drawn; which to the Governor
He sent, entrusted to a timid Messenger,
Whom spent and in despair, upon the banks
Of the swoln river happily I found:
Learnt his sad story; pull'd him from his steed,
A noble creature! on whose back I sprung,
And plunging straight into the booming flood,
While crowds on shore stood shrieking at our boldness,
Swam right across some miles below the pass
Which we must else have gain'd, and been, I guess,
An hour too late to save my master's life.
My noble master!
(*taking* Rayner's *hand as if to kiss it.*)

Ray. (*embracing him.*) My brave devoted Herman! in my need,
A friend most true and fearless.—
But how was this? I thought thee far from hence.

Her. And so I meant to be, but as I journey'd,
Thinking upon your helpless state, dear Master!
A strange misgiving came upon my mind,
And so I turned and measur'd back my way.
Methinks it was the providence of heaven
That stirr'd such thoughts within me.

Hard. A heartless dolt is he who deems it otherwise.
Come to my heart! thou art a noble fellow,
And shalt be rich to boot. Aye, and thy steed,
Shall in the richest pasture of the land,
Forgetting bit and bridle, spend his days.
No, no; (*laying his hand on* Ray.) here is my son, my heir, my child;
All that I have is his; *he* shall reward thee.

Ray. My generous friend, my father.—Oh my heart
Can find no words that may express its thanks.
And here comes one who makes all utt'rance vain.

Enter ELIZABETH and rushes into RAYNER's arms; the crowd then eagerly gathers round, and closes upon them.

Mar. (*stepping out from the circle and looking upon them with emotion.*)
Yes, gather round him, kindly souls though rude,
In the true artless sympathy of nature;
For he is one o'er whom the storm has roll'd
In awful power, but spar'd the thunderbolt.
When urg'd by strong temptation to the brink
Of guilt and ruin, stands the virtuous mind
With scarce a step between; all-pitying Heaven,
Severe in mercy, chast'ning in its love,
Oft times in dark and awful visitation,
Doth interpose, and lead the wand'rer back
To the straight path, to be forever after
A firm, undaunted, onward bearing traveller,
Strong in humility, who swerves no more.

THE COUNTRY INN: A COMEDY.

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

MEN:

SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.
WORSHIPTON, *nephew to* Sir John.
AMARYLLIS, *a poet.*
DAVID, *servant, &c. of the Inn.*
WILL, *postboy of the Inn.*
JENKINS, *servant to* Worshipton.
Piper, Fiddler, &c.

WOMEN:

LADY GOODBODY.
MISS MARTIN, } *nieces to* Lady
MISS HANNAH CLODPATE, } Goodbody.
DOLLY, *maid of the Inn.*
LANDLADY.
HOPKINS, *Lady* Goodbody's *maid.*
SALLY.

SCENE.—A Country Inn, *on one of the cross roads leading from the North of* England *to* London.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—THE KITCHEN OF A COUNTRY INN: DAVID AND JENKINS DISCOVERED SITTING BY THE FIRE-SIDE.

David. John Thomson, says I, why do you put yourself into a passion? an angry man, says I, John, may be compared to three things.

Jen. Yaw! yaw! (*yawning very wide*) how thick that snow falls! (*looking to the window.*)

David. Well, well! let it fall as thick as it pleases!—To three things, John. In the first place, in respect that he is very hot, and very restless, and all that, he may be compared to the boiling of a pot——no, no! that was the third thing.

Jen. Never mind, man; put it first this time, for a variety.

David. No, no! let us have every thing as it should be. In the first place then, says I, in respect that he is so sharp, and so fussy, and so bouncing, he may be compared to your poor bottled small-beer: and in the second place, in respect that he is so loud and violent, and so hasty, he may be compared———

Jen. Yaw! yaw! yaw! (*yawning again very loud.*)

David. (*very impatiently.*) Tut, man! can't you keep those jaws of yours together, and hear what a body says?

Jen. Yaw, yaw! Don't think because I yawn, David, that I don't hear what you say.—But go on with your story: in the second place———

David. In the second place, says I, in respect that he is so violent and so loud, and so hasty, he may be compared to the letting off of a———

Jen. Of a train of gun-powder.

David. No, sir; it was not to that, sir.

Jen. To the letting off of what, then?

David. No matter what: I had a comparison of my own, but I'll keep it to myself.

Jen. Very well, David; just as you please; for I can see now what an angry man is like, without your giving yourself any further trouble.

David. Ay, ay! jeer away sir! you are just like your poor silly affected master up stairs, who simpers whenever I open my mouth to speak, as if nobody had any sense but himself.

Jen. I don't think that my master sets up for a wise man neither, master David; but he's young and well made, and———

David. He well made, hang him! his uncle is a better made man by half.—Ay, there is a gentleman for ye! a reasonable, sensible, mannerly gentleman! he don't break in upon one with his sneers and his jeers when a body is talking soberly and sensibly.

Jen. To be sure he has rather more manners about him than we can pretend to.

David. By my faith, he has! and more sense too. What do you think he said to me the other day? David, says he, you only want a great wig upon your head and a gown upon your shoulders, to make as good a proser as many that we listen to in the pulpit or the bench. Now, wan't it very condescending in him to call such a poor unlearned man as me a proser, along with such great folks as these? Not that I regarded so much the compliment to myself, for God knows, it becometh not a mortal man to be proud, but I love to hear people speak rationally and civilly.

Jen. Yes, there is nothing like it to be sure: but my young master is a very good master to me, and he spends his money like a gentleman.

David. I don't care a rush how he spends his money: they seem to be the greatest gentlemen, now-a-days, who have least money to spend. But if you had fallen sick on the road, like that poor old devil in the rose chamber, would your master have stopp'd so long at a poor Country Inn, to attend you himself like a sick nurse? I trow not! he would have scamper'd off, and left you to follow when you could, or to die, if you had a mind to it.

Jen. If I were old and sickly, indeed, I had

as lief have Sir John for my master.

David. I believe so: he is a better man than that skip-jack nephew of his, twenty times over, and a better looking man too. I wonder much how he has come to this time o' th' day (for he must be near forty I guess) without taking a wife.

Jen. He thinks himself happier, I suppose, without one. And I am sure no lady of any spirit or fashion would think herself happy with him.

David. How so? what kind of a man is he at home on his own estate?

Jen. Why, half ploughman; for he often enough holds his own plough of a morning, and can cast ye up as straight a furrow as any clod-footed lout in the country; half priest, for he reads family prayers to his servants every Sunday evening as devoutly as the vicar of the parish; half lawyer, for there is never a poor silly idiot that allows himself to be cheated in the neighborhood who does not run to him about it directly, and he will brow-beat and out-wit half a dozen of attorneys to have the goose righted again, if it were but of a crown's value.

David. Well, but there is nothing amiss in all this.

Jen. Then his other odd ways. Dinner must be upon the table every day at the very moment he has fixed, and he will not give ten minutes law to the first lord of the land. Devilishly inconvenient that, for young fellows like me and my master.

David. So much the better; I commend him for it.

Jen. Then he pretends to be hospitable, and entertains the first people of the country, and yet he is not ashamed to boast that there has not been a drunk man in his house since he was master of it.

David. Nay, odds life! that is being too particular, indeed.

Jen. Ay, to be sure; and yet he puts always such an easy good humoured face upon it, that people will not call him a hunks for all that. One half of it I'm sure would have made any other man pass for a very curmudgeon. What has such a man to do with a wife, unless he could get some sober young lady, educated two hundred years ago, who has kept herself young and fresh all the while in some cave under ground along with the seven sleepers, to start up to his hand and say, "pray have me?"—As for my master, he would remain a bachelor if he could; but we young fellows who have only our persons for our patrimony, must dispose of them in their prime, when they will fetch the highest price.

David. To be sure, to be sure! Princesses a piece for you! young men, now-a-days, are mightily puffed up in their own conceits. They are colts without a bridle, but they bite upon the bit at last. They are butterflies in the sun, but a rainy day washes the lour off their wings. They sail down the stream very briskly, but it carries them over the ca-cartica——cataract (what ye call a water-fall ye know) at last.

Jen. Faith, David! you string up so many what do ye call 'em similitudes in your discourse, there is no understanding it: you are just like that there poet in the green chamber, that writes upon the windows.

David. He, drivling fellow! he has not sense enough to make a similitude. If it were not for the words he contrives to make clink with one another at the end of every line, his verses would be little better than what a body may call mere stuff.

Enter DOLLY.

Dolly. You'll never write such good ones tho', for all your great wisdom, Mr. David.

David. Ay, you're a good judge to be sure! I'm sure you could not read them though they were printed in big letters before your nose, hussy. You can tell us, I make no doubt of it, how his julep tastes, and how his breath smells after the garlic peels that he takes to lay the cold wind in his stomach, and how his ruffled night-cap becomes him too; for you have been very serviceable to him of late, and not very sparing of your visits to his chamber of an evening; but as for his verses, Mrs. Doll, you had better be quiet about them.

Dolly. I say his verses are as pretty verses as any body would desire, and I don't care a rush what you say about his night-cap or his garlic.

David. Lord, Lord! to hear how women will talk about what they don't understand! Let me see now if you know the meaning of the lines he has scratch'd on the middle pane of the north window:

"'Twas not that orient blush, that arm of snow,
"That eye's celestial blue, which caus'd my woe,
"'Twas thy exalted mind, my peace which stole,
"And all thy moving sympathy of soul."

Now, can you understand that, mistress madam?

Dolly. I say the verses are very pretty verses; and what does it signify whether one understands them or not?

David. And then upon the other pane close by it:

"Give me the maid, whose bosom high
"Doth often heave the tender sigh;
"Whose eye, suffus'd with tender care,
"Doth often shed the soft luxurious tear."

(To Jenkins.) Now this is Doll herself he means in these verses, for he came to this house the very day that the beggar-woman stole her new stockings from the side of the wash-tub, and I'm sure she shed as many tears about them as would have wash'd them as white as a lily, tho' they were none of the cleanest neither, it must be confess'd.—If I were to write poetry——

Dolly. If you were to write poetry! Don't you remember when you made that bad metre for Goody Gibson's grave-stone, and all the parish laugh'd at it?

"All ye gentle Christians who pass by,
"Upon this dumb stone cast a pitying eye;
"I pray you for yourselves, not me, bewail,
"I on life's follies now have turned tail."

And don't you remember when you went to church afterwards, how all the children of the village pointed with their fingers, and turn'd round their behinds to you as you pass'd? If you were to write poetry, forsooth!

David. Devil take you, you filthy lying jade! it is well for you that I scorn to be angry with the likes of you.

Dolly. (*laughing in his face.*)

"I pray ye for yourselves bewail,
"For I on life have turned tail."

(David *takes up a stool and runs after her to cast it at her head.*) O mercy! my head, my head!

Jen. (*preventing him.*) Nay, David, I can't see a lady used ill in my presence. Consider, my good friend, a man in a passion may be compared to three things.

David. Devil take your three things, and all the things that ever were in the world! If I but once get hold of her!

Enter LANDLADY.

Landlady. What's this noise for? are you all mad, to make such a disturbance and gentle-folks in the house? I protest, as I am a living woman, you make my house more liker a Bedlam than a sober Inn for gentle-folks to stop at.

David. (*still shaking his fist at* Dolly.) If I could get hold of her, I would dress her! I would curry-comb her!

Landlady. Won't you have done with it yet? curry-comb your horses, and let my maid alone. They stand in the stable, poor things, in dirty litter up to their bellies, while you sit here prating, and preaching as tho' you were the vicar of the parish.

David. Must one be always attending upon a parcel of damn'd brutes, as tho' they were one's betters? must a body's arm never have a moment's rest?

Landlady. Let thy tongue rest a while, David: that is the member of thy body that hast most reason to be tired. And as for you, Doll, mind your own work, and other people will leave you alone. Have you pluck'd the crows for the pigeon-pye yet, and scraped the maggots from the stale mutton? well do I know there's ne'er a bit of all this done; we shall be put to such a hurry scurry to get the dinner dress'd, that all the nice victuals will be spoil'd (*Bell rings.*). O lud, lud! how they do ring them bells! Run and see what's wanted, Dolly. (EXIT Dolly.) This comes of making a noise, now! [EXIT Jenkins.

David. The greatest noise has been of your own making, I'm sure.

Landlady. O dear me! what will this house come to! It will turn my poor head at last.

Re-enter DOLLY in a great hurry.

Dolly. A coach, a coach! a coach at the door, and fine ladies in it too as ever my eyes beheld.

Landlady. A coach say you? that's something indeed. I wish the stairs had been scower'd this morning. Run and light a fire in the blue chamber.

[EXEUNT Landlady *and* Dolly *severally, in great haste.*

David. I wonder what can bring these lady-folks out now in such cold weather as this. Have they never a fire at home to sit by, in a plague to them! They'll bring as many vile smoking beasts with them, as will keep my poor arms—— [EXIT *grumbling.*

Re-enter LANDLADY, shewing in LADY GOODBODY, MISS MARTIN, and HANNAH, followed by a Maid, carrying boxes, &c.

Landlady. O la, ladies! I am sorry the fires an't lit: but I have just ordered one to be lit in the blue chamber, and it will be ready immediately. I am sure your ladyships must be so cold; for it is to be sure the severest weather I ever see'd.

Lady G. We shall warm ourselves here in the mean time.

Miss Martin. What place can be so comfortable in a frosty morning as a stool by the kitchen fire?

(*Sits down on a stool by the fire.*)

Landlady. O dear, ladies! here are chairs. (*Sets chairs for them.*)

Lady G. (*to* Maid.) Here is a seat for you too, Hopkins, sit down by the fire.

Hopkins. I thank you, my lady, I must look after the things in the coach. (*Sets down the box, &c. and* EXIT.

Lady G. (*to* Landlady.) Have you many travellers, ma'am, in this road?

Landlady. O yes, my lady, a pretty many. We had a little time ago my Lady the Countess of Postaway, and a power of fine folks with her. It was a mighty cold day when she came, madam, and she was a mighty good humour'd lady to be sure: she sat by the fire here just in that very corner as your ladyship does now.

Miss Martin. It has been a highly-honour'd nook indeed.

Lady G. Pray ma'am, what have you got in the house for dinner? for it snows so fast I think it will be impossible for us to get any further to day.

Landlady. O la, to be sure! I have got, my lady, a nice pigeon-pye for dinner, and some very tender mutton. But do you know, my Lady Countess would dine upon nothing but a good dish of fried eggs and bacon, tho' we had

some very nice things in the house, I'll assure you. I don't say, to be sure, that quality are all fond of the same kinds of victuals; but sometimes it will so happen that pigeons will not be equally plump and delicate as at other times, let us do what we will with them; and the mutton being fed upon old grass, my lady, will now and then be a little strong tasted or so.—O dear me! if it had not been all eaten up two days ago, I could have given you such a nice turkey! it was to be sure as great a beauty as ever was put upon a spit. Howsomever, you may perhaps after all, ladies, prefer the eggs and bacon.

Miss Martin. Yes, my good ma'am; the eggs and bacon that may be eaten to-day will answer our purpose rather better than the turkey that was eaten yesterday.

Lady G. Have you any company in the house?

Landlady. O yes, my lady, we have a good pleasant gentleman, who has been here these three days, because his servant was taken ill upon the road, Sir John Hazelwood, and his nephew with him; and we have a strange kind of a gentleman who has been here these three weeks, just to be quiet, as he says himself, and to study the musics, tho' I can't say we ever hear him play upon any thing neither. Howsomever, he diverts himself all day long after his own fashion, poor man, writing bits of metre upon the windows and such like, and does harm to nobody.

Hannah. (*after gazing for a long time at the things ranged over the chimney.*) There is a pair of candlesticks the very same with those we had in our bed-room at the last inn: look if they an't, the very fellows to them, cousin, all but the little bead round the sockets. (*To* Miss M.)

Lady G. (*to* Hannah.) My good child, you are always observing things that nobody else notices. (*To* Miss M.) Sir John Hazelwood is an old acquaintance of mine; I'll let him know that I am here presently.

Enter Dolly.

Dolly. The room is ready, ladies, and the fire very good.

Lady G. We shall go to it then. Let me have a candle, pray; I shall have some letters to seal by and by.

Dolly. Yes, ma'am; and mistress got some wax ones when the great lady was here, I'll bring you one of them.

Lady G. No, no, child! a tallow one will do well enough. [Exeunt Lady Goodbody, Miss Martin, *and* Hannah, Landlady *conducting them.*

Enter Will.

Will. Yes, Doll, give her a tallow candle, and a stinking one too.

Dolly. The lady seems a very good lady, Mr. Sauce-box; and as to stinking candles, I would have you to know we have no such things in the house.

Will. That is plaguy unlucky then, for this is the first time since I came to the house that you have been without them.—Confound the old stingy hypocrite! I wish they smelt like carrion, for her sake.

Dolly. What makes you so bitter against the poor lady? I'm sure she is as civil a spoken lady as——

Will. Yes, mighty civil, truly. I hate your smooth-spoken people: it is licking the butter off other people's bread that keeps their tongues so well oil'd. I drove like the devil to get here before the snow came on; I spared neither myself nor my cattle to please her, and what do you think I had for my pains?

Dolly. I can't say: it is a long stage to be sure.

Will. Paltry half-a-crown, an' be hanged to her!

Dolly. But why did you take so much pains to please her? I never knew you do so before, but when you were promised a bribe for your trouble.

Will. Because I tell you she's a hypocrite, and would deceive Old Nick, if he were not as cunning as herself. When she passed thro' Middleton she bought as many coarse stockings as would have stocked a hosier's shop; and her maid told me they were all to be sent to her own estate to be given to the poor of the neighbourhood; so, thinks I to myself, this must be some rich liberal lady that gives away money with both hands, I won't stand upon trifles with her, and off I set like the deuce. But 'tis all a cursed lie: she'll sell them again, I'll be bound for it, and make a groat of profit upon every pair. I'll be revenged upon her! Hark ye, Doll; I'll give thee a new top-knot if thou'lt help me in any way to be revenged upon her.

Dolly. Nay, nay, you promised me one last fair, Will, and brought me home nothing but a two-penny bun after all. I know you well enough; so you may play your tricks off by yourself: I'll have nothing to do with you. [Exit.

Will. What ails the wench now, I wonder; ever since that there poet, as they call him, has been in the house, she has spoken to me as if I were a pair of old boots. [Exit.

Scene II.—A Parlour.

Enter Sir John Hazlewood and Worshipton.

Sir John H. Well, Ned, here is a rich heiress unexpectedly fallen in our way; you or I for her?

Wor. If women favour'd men for their merit, Sir John, I should not presume to enter the lists with you: but, luckily, they prefer a good complexion to a good understanding; a well-made leg to what my grandmother used to call a well-order'd mind; and a very little fashion to a great deal of philosophy; which makes us good-for-nothing fellows come far-

ther into their good graces than wiser men think we are entitled to.

Sir John H. You are very humble and very diffident truly; the meaning of what you say being simply this, that you are a mighty handsome fellow. Well, be it so; make as much of your personal qualifications as you can: it were hard indeed if they did not stand you in some good account, since you and your fashionable brotherhood take no pains to acquire any other.

Wor. And they will stand us in good account, my good sir. Upon my honour, we treat the sex in a much fairer manner than you do. She who marries one of us sees what she gets, but he who pretends to a woman on the score of his mental accomplishments, holds out to her a most deceitful lure. A man's temper and opinions may change, but he always wears the same pair of legs.

Sir John H. There is some reason in this, I confess: and there is one advantage you have in thus tricking out your four quarters for the market,—they are in no danger of going off for less than they are worth. Your man of ton, as you call it, most commonly ends his career by marrying just such a woman as he deserves.

Wor. End his career! who the devil would marry if it were not to prolong it? A man may indeed sometimes be tempted to marry a fashionable beauty to please his vanity.

Sir John H. Or break his heart.

Wor. Poh, poh! there are more people who die of broken heads now o'days. A man may sometimes marry a woman of rank to be look'd up to by his old friends.

Sir John H. Or down upon by his new ones.

Wor. You are crusty now.—But a rich wife is the only one who can really excuse a young fellow for taking upon himself the sober name of husband.

Sir John H. If this is your opinion, you had better still retain the more sprightly one of bachelor.

Wor. And leave the heiress to you, Sir John.

Sir John H. No, Worshipton; there is not a woman now existing, as the world goes, that would suit me; and I verily think that here as I stand, with all my opinions and habits about me, I would suit no woman: I must e'en remain as I am.

Wor. I wish to God I could do so too: I should ask no better.

Sir John H. What should hinder you, young man?

Wor. I am under the necessity of marrying: my circumstances oblige me to it.

Sir John H. I am at a loss to comprehend the necessity you talk of.

Wor. Will three hundred a year and a commission in the army keep a man's pocket in loose money, my good sir, support a groom and valet, a pair of riding horses, and a curricle?

Sir John H. I crave your pardon, sir: these things being necessaries, you are perfectly in the right; and if you choose to impose a disagreeable restraint upon yourself for such necessaries, nobody has any right to find fault with you.

Wor. Impose upon myself a restraint! Ha! ha! ha! pardon me! this is rather an amusing idea of yours.

Sir John H. Why, you would not be base enough to marry a woman and neglect her.

Wor. No, Sir John; I should pay her as much attention as women of the world now expect, and she who is not satisfied with that must be a fool.

Sir John H. Well, pray heaven you may find one wise enough to be satisfied with you! But if you seriously mean to pay your addresses to Sir Rowland's heiress, you must inform her of the real state of your affairs. I'll have no advantage taken of a young woman under my eye, tho' it should be for the interest of my family.

Wor. I shall pretend to nothing but what she may be ascertained of if she has eyes in her head.

Sir John H. No, not so easily ascertained as you imagine. There is many a handsome man in the world whom nature never made so. Flattery has softened many a rugged visage, and lick'd many an awkward cub into shape; and he who takes this method of becoming a pretty fellow before marriage, is bound in honour to continue it, that he may still remain such after marriage.

Wor. What! must I be repeating the same thing to her all my life long? Tell a woman once in plain English that she is charming, and there is no danger of her forgetting it.

Sir John H. Well, deal honourably, and I shall rejoice in your success.——But I must go to the stable and give directions to my groom: I shall return presently. [Exit.

Wor. (*alone.*) Honourably! yes, yes, we are all mighty conscientious in every thing that is for the interest of another. But watch me as you please, my good Sir John, you shan't find me out. What a plaguy thing it is to have an uncle of forty-one! What a devil of an age it is! for one has but little hope of a legacy from it, and it has, at the same time, all the cold, cautious, advice-giving spirit of three-score and ten. This Sir Rowland's daughter is a good scheme, upon my soul. He must be sickly, I think, from his always living at home in such a retired situation. I dare say he'll die soon, and who knows but the lady may step off too, being of a sickly stock. Yes, I feel a persuasion within me that I am born to be a lucky fellow. But hush! here come the ladies. The fat aunt walks first, and the rich heiress follows. A genteel-looking woman, faith! this is admirable luck. But who is this awkward creature that comes sneaking after them? some humble relation, I suppose.

Enter Lady Goodbody, Miss Martin, and Hannah.

Lady G. I beg pardon if I have made any mistake; I thought Sir John Hazelwood——

Wor. There is no mistake, madam; Sir John will be here immediately. Permit me to place chairs.

Lady G. You are very obliging, but we have sat so long in a close carriage this morning, that we should be glad to stand a little while. Sir John's politeness has made him sacrifice his own convenience, I am afraid.

Wor. I am sure he is well repaid in the honour he receives. (*To* Miss Martin.) I hope, ma'am, you feel no bad effects from the cold journey you have had?

Miss Martin. None at all, I thank you; we have just felt cold enough to make a warm room very comfortable after it.

Wor. What a charming disposition, thus to extract pleasure from uneasiness?

Miss Martin. The merit of finding a good fire comfortable after a cold winter journey, is one that may be claimed without much diffidence.

Lady G. Pray, sir, did you ever see such a heavy fall of snow come on so suddenly?

Wor. Really, madam, I don't recollect. (*Turning again to* Miss Martin.) But it is the character of true merit———

Lady G. Pardon me, sir, you have something of the family face: are you not related to Sir John?

Wor. I have the honour to be his nephew, madam. (*Turning again to* Miss Martin.) I shall fall in love with rough weather for this day's good fortune.

Lady G. I suppose, sir, you are acquainted with the family of the Mapletofts in your county.

Wor. I believe I have seen them. (*Turning again to* Miss Martin, *and continuing to speak to her with much devotion.*)

Lady G. (*to* Hannah.) Well, my dear, you and I must talk together, I find. How did you like the country we pass'd thro' to day?

Hannah. La, aunt! it is just like our own; I saw no difference.

Lady G. You are foolish, child; is not our's a flat country clothed with trees, and this a bare and hilly one?

Hannah. La, I did not look out of the coach windows all the way, except when we stopp'd at the turnpike; and I'm sure it is a little tiled house with a gate by the side of it, just like the one near our own entry; only that our's has got a pear-tree on the wall, and it has got some dried turf piled up by the door, with a part of an old wheelbarrow.

Lady G. Well, you'll have more observation by and bye, I hope.

Enter Sir John Hazelwood.

Sir John H. I am happy in the honour of seeing your ladyship and these fair ladies.

Lady G. And we reckon ourselves particularly fortunate in meeting with you, Sir John; you are very good indeed to give up so much of your own accommodation to poor storm-bound travellers. Allow me to present my nieces to you. (*After presenting her nieces.*) It is a long time since we met, Sir John, you were then a mere lad, and I was not myself a very old woman.

Sir John H. I remember perfectly the last time I had the pleasure of seeing your ladyship, tho' being a bachelor still, I don't care to say how long it is ago. Your brother Sir Rowland was with you then; I hope he is well.

Lady G. He is very well: I ought to have introduced his daughter to you particularly. (Sir John *going up to* Miss Martin.) No, no! this (*pointing to* Hannah) is my brother Rowland's daughter. She is somewhat like her mother, who died, as you know, at a very early age, leaving him but this child.

(Worshipton, *who is about to present with much devotion a glove to* Miss Martin, *which she had dropped, lets it fall out of his hand, and retiring some paces back, stares with astonishment at* Hannah.)

Sir John H. (*to* Hannah.) I am happy to have this opportunity of paying my respects to the daughter of my old friend. I hope, madam, you will admit of this plea for being better acquainted.

Lady G. (*aside to* Hannah.) Answer him, child.

Hannah. (*curtsying awkwardly.*) My father is very well, I thank you, sir.

Miss Martin. (*looking slyly at* Worshipton.) I fancy, after all, I must pick up this glove myself. I am afraid some sudden indisposition———

Wor. (*confusedly*) I beg pardon! I—I have a slight pain in my jaw-bone; I believe it is the tooth-ach.

Lady G. The tooth-ach! how I pity you! there is no pain in the world so bad. But I have a cure for it that I always carry about in my pocket for the good of myself and my friends: do swallow some drops of it; it will cure you presently. (*offering him a phial.*)

Wor. (*retreating from her.*) You are infinitely obliging, madam, but I never take any thing for it.

Lady G. (*following him with the phial.*) Do take it, and hold it in your mouth for some time before you swallow it. It is very nauseous, but it will cure you.

Wor. (*still retreating.*) Pray, madam, be so obliging as to excuse me: I cannot possibly swallow it.

Lady G. (*pressing it still more earnestly.*) Indeed, indeed, it will cure you, and I must positively insist upon your taking it.

Wor. (*defending himself vehemently.*) Positively then, madam, you oblige me to say— (*breaking suddenly away.*) Pest take all the drugs in the world! (*Aside.*)

Sir John H. You must not, Lady Goodbody, insist on curing a man against his will:

he likes the pain perhaps: let him enjoy it.

Wor. (*returning.*) Indeed, I am very much obliged to your ladyship; I am much better now. Forgive my impatience; I don't know what I said.

Lady G. I am very glad you are better, and I forgive you with all my heart, tho' it is a remedy that I have long had the greatest faith in, distill'd by myself from the very best ingredients, and has cured a great many people, I assure you. (*To* Sir John.) So you took this lady for Sir Rowland's daughter? (*pointing to* Miss Martin.) Do you see no traces in her countenance of my sister and Colonel Martin? She lost both her parents early, and she has ever since been my child.

Sir John H. You are happy in having such a daughter.

Lady G. I am so: she is a very good girl, and has many excellent qualities, which young women now-a-days do but rarely possess.

Sir John H. I dare say she is a most amiable companion, whom you would be very unwilling to part with.

Lady G. Nay, Sir John, I am not so selfish neither, but that I should willingly give her up to a good husband.

Miss Martin. (*aside to* Lady Goodbody.) Bless me, ma'am, why will you do this? you know I can't bear it. (*Aloud to* Sir John.) You must not trust Lady Goodbody's account of me; for if she thought size necessary to make a woman perfect, it would be difficult to persuade her that I am not six feet high.

Sir John H. Excuse me, ma'am, I have always trusted to Lady Goodbody's opinions, and have never felt more inclination to do so than at this moment.

Lady G. She always behaves like a fool when she is praised, and, excepting this, I don't know a fault that she has.

(Enter a Servant, announcing dinner.)

(*To* Miss Martin.) Go before, my dear, and place my chair as you know I like it. [Exit Miss Martin, *followed by* Sir John *leading out* Lady Goodbody.)

Wor. (*looking askance at* Hannah, *and then going up to her with an unwilling shrug.*) Permit me to have the honour——

[Exit, *handing her out.*

ACT II.

Scene I.—Lady Goodbody, Miss Martin, and Hannah, Sir John Hazelwood, Worshipton, and Amaryllis, discovered sitting by a table, with wine and glasses, &c. before them.

Lady G. But indeed, my dear Sir John, you ought to marry.

Sir John H. Indeed, my dear Lady Goodbody, I can't see that I am in duty bound so to do.

Lady G. Ah, but you are tho'! It would have made your good worthy grandmother so happy to have seen children of yours growing up to preserve the honours of the family.

Sir John H. It is too late now to think of pleasing my grandmother after she has been twenty years in her grave: your ladyship must offer some other argument to convince me.

Lady G. You owe it to your country, then: all familes who have good fortunes and good blood in their veins, should be kept up for the sake of their country. Is not every body sorry when a house of this kind becomes extinct?

Sir John H. If I thought my estates would cease to bear corn and hay upon them in possession of a different family, I should marry to-morrow for the good of the country, most certainly. I should be very sorry to be sure to make every body sorry for my want of heirs: but I remember when my neighbour Squire Wheelbarrow lost his only son, there was as much merry-making, and as much ale drank at the very next fair, upon his own estate too, as if nobody had cared a rush about the matter. I believe you must produce some stronger reason still, my lady.

Wor. Yes, do keep it up, madam! don't let him off so easily.

Lady G. (*gayly.*) For the sake of the ladies then, Sir John, you ought to be a bachelor no longer.

Wor. Now your ladyship attacks him from a strong post.

Amaryllis. Now, madam, you touch the finest chord of the soul's harmony.

Sir John H. She does; I allow it. But I contend that I am of more service to the ladies in my present state than I could possibly be in any other. Have I not danced at our country balls with all the neglected damsels who could find no partners to lead them out for these ten years past? and do I not still serve as a forlorn hope to half the desponding maidens and unsettled widows of the west-riding of Yorkshire?

Wor. (*to* Lady Goodbody.) Upon my honour, madam, he tells you serious truth as to the neglected damsels; for he has danced with them so often, that it would be no longer the fashion for any other kind of damsels to dance with him, if he had not too good an estate to be rejected.

Lady G. Your services to the ladies are too general, Sir John; to make one deserving woman happy is the best way of shewing your respect for them.

Sir John H. And what lady, my good madam, will expect happiness from an elderly rusticated bachelor?

Lady G. No sensible woman dislikes an agreeable man because he may be past the heyday of his life. My niece here (*pointing to* Miss Martin) has often said to her giddy companions, that an agreeable man of forty

is preferable to the frivolous young men of the world that one meets with every where now-a-days.

Miss Martin. You would oblige me very much, my dear madam, if you would speak your own sentiments, without doing me the honour to make me so much wiser than I pretend to be.

Sir John H. If your ladyship pleases, we shall drop this subject. I am obliged to you for your friendly advice, but it is not in my power to profit by it; for I cannot, for the mere love of being married, yoke myself to a bad wife; and I am so capricious and so strange with my old-rooted habits, that I really don't deserve to have a good one.

Wor. That is the very case with him, madam; he must have, forsooth, such a woman as the sun never beheld: a woman of wit who holds her tongue; a good housewife who teazes nobody with her economy; and a woman who knows the world, and yet prefers retirement in the country, and his honour's amiable conversation, to every thing in it. May I be —— if ever I require more of any woman than to be well dress'd and look pretty as long as I live.

Lady G. (*to* Sir John.) Do you tolerate oaths in your presence?

Sir John H. I don't at least encourage them by my example.

Wor. How should you, my good sir? you bury yourself so much in the country, you scarcely know what oaths are in use.

Sir John H. That is not my reason for abstaining from them, however: if ever I should betake myself to swearing, I shall give myself very little concern about the fashion of the oath; ods bodikins will do well enough for me, and lack-a-daysy for my wife, if I should ever be happy enough, following Lady Goodbody's advice, to have one. But Mr. Amaryllis are you silent all this while? it is surely your turn next to tell us what kind of a woman you prefer: some very refined being, undoubtedly.

Amaryllis. Beauty, wit, fashion, and economy are prized by most men, Sir John; but let the maid whose tender sensibility, whose soft delicacy, whose sympathy of soul gently animates her countenance, be my portion, and every other thing I can dispense with.

Miss Martin. You three gentlemen, at least, are so far lucky in your tastes, that you are in no danger of ever becoming rivals.

Lady G. I must own, however, Sir John's choice appears to me to be the most reasonable, and not so difficult to be met with neither. My nieces spend many lonely months in the country with me, and Miss Martin prefers it, tho' she is naturally of a gay disposition; why should we not believe then that there are many young women in the world of the same character?

Miss Martin. (*aside to* Lady Goodbody.) For heaven's sake, ma'am, give this up! you'll put me beside myself.

Lady G. (*aside to* Miss Martin.) You're a fool, and don't know when one is serving you.

Sir John H. (*to* Miss Martin.) There is nothing can be said in your praise, madam, that will not be readily credited; but to prefer country retirement, and a bachelor past the noon of his days, is a singular taste for a young and gay woman.

Miss Martin. Perhaps it is so: but unluckily it is one to which I make not the smallest pretensions. I love the amusements of town to a folly; retirement is irksome to me; and I hate a capricious old——(*stopping short as if shocked at herself, with great embarrassment*.)

Lady G. (*very angrily*.) Miss Martin: how can you be so perverse!

Sir John H. Pray, my dear madam, let us not fall out about this foolish jest which we have kept up too long. Here comes a strange original old fellow, who is in the custom of amusing us a little after dinner, but he forgets that there are ladies with us at present.

Lady G. Pray let him come, we shall be glad to hear him talk a little.

Enter David.

David (*to* Sir John.) A good afternoon to your honour.

Sir John H. How do you do, my honest friend David?

David. As well as a dry mouth and an empty head will allow a poor silly fellow like me to be.

Sir John H. Ay, David, wise men always speak modestly of themselves, tho' they don't insist upon every body believing them. Here is something for thy dry mouth; you must drink a bumper to the ladies' healths.

David. Such ladies as these deserve bumpers a-piece to their healths.

Sir John H. So they do; and here's the first for you. (*Filling him a glass*.)

David. (*drinking*.) My humble respects to your Ladyship. (*To* Lady Goodbody.)

Lady G. I'm proud of the respect of so wise a man, Mr. David.

David. O Lord, madam, why should I be held in any account? What tho' a body may have a better understanding of things, and a better way of setting his words in order, as it were, than another; 'tis all but the gift of God, and why should a body be proud of it?

Miss Martin. But folks will be proud of any gift, Mr. David, unless they be endued, like you, with the rare gift of modesty also.

David. Faith, young lady, you're in the rights of it there. Here's to your very good health: here's to your secret inclinations.

Miss Martin. I thank you; but you are waggish as well as wise.

David. O yes, madam! nothing comes amiss to me. After I have been talking, mehap of the Pope, or the Emperor, or the land-tax, or the solemn league and covenant,

I can just go and break my jests among the women as if I were no better than one of themselves.

Miss Martin. How wonderfully condescending to the poor silly women!

David. O yes, madam, I have no pride about me: I can just talk like one of themselves. (*Drinking to* Hannah.) My service to you, young lady. (*Raising his voice.*) Yes, yes, commend me to the women: they don't envy any little wit that one may have. But conscience, I care for the face of no man! (*Looking at* Amaryllis.) Some of them, mehap, have read more books than me, and can tell you the Latin for one word, and the Greek for another, and the likes o' that; but for good deep sense, and a knack at a comparison, I'll defy the best of them all. Ods dickens! I could find ye out a similitude for the sun, moon, and stars, in the paring of a black pudding's end. (*Laughing without, and* Will's *head seen peeping at the door which* David *had left a-jar.*)

Sir John H. What's that?

David. By my troth, I've forgot my errand! I have brought the poor girl who sings so well to divert your honours, and she is waiting at the door with some ill-manner'd companions along with her.

Lady G. Pray bring her in, we shall be glad to have a song from her. (David *goes to the door, and leading in* Sally, *shuts it in* Will's *face with great indignation.*)

David. (*to* Sally.) Come in, hussey, and let those sneering varlets amuse themselves. Sing the ladies one of your new songs.

Sir John H. I believe they would rather have one of your old ones.

Sally. Will you please to have the Sailor's Courtship to the Tinker's Daughter; or, "My tatter'd Hose and clouted Shoon?"

Sir John H. I rather think the clouted shoon will do best.

SONG.

Tho' richer swains thy love pursue,
In Sunday geer, and bonnets new;
And ev'ry fair before thee lay
Their silken gifts with colours gay;
They love thee not, alas! so well
As one who sighs and dares not tell;
Who haunts thy dwelling, night and noon
In tatter'd hose and clouted shoon.

I grieve not for my wayward lot,
My empty folds, my roofless cot;
Nor hateful pity, proudly shown,
Nor alter'd looks, nor friendship flown;
Nor yet my dog with lanken sides,
Who by his master still abides;
But how will Nan prefer my boon,
In tatter'd hose and clouted shoon!

Miss Martin. She has a charming voice, and sings with some skill.

Sir John H. Who taught you these songs, Sally?

Sally. My father, sir; he's a fid———

David. (*pinching her arm aside.*) Fiddler an't genteel; say he's a musicianer.

Sally. He's a musicianer, sir. (*Worshipton laughs impertinently, and stares at* Sally, *who keeps retiring in confusion as he still continues to stare, and at last runs out.*)

David. Is the sheep-faced fool gone?

[Exit *after her in great indignation.*

Wor. (*to* Amaryllis.) Let us go and coax her to return.

[Exit Worshipton *and* Amaryllis.

Sir John H. She is very young, and we must excuse her.

Lady G. There are more people here than her who ought to plead the same excuse. Miss Martin, you have behaved very strangely, and can only be pardoned on account of your youth.

Miss Martin. I have done so many foolish things for six-and-twenty years past, that you are really very good, my dear madam, to pardon me on that score.

Lady G. What do you mean? what do you mean, child, by calling yourself older than you are?

Miss Martin. I have been of age these five years, and most people, I believe, will call that six-and-twenty.

Sir John H. Your servant, ladies, we shall meet again at the tea-table. [Exit.

Lady G. Very well, very well, Miss Martin! since you will be six-and-twenty, tho' you know well enough you want two months and a half of it, with all my heart. But allow me to tell you, a maiden of that age should look pretty sharply about her, if she would not still remain a lonely maiden all her life.

Miss Martin. I am sure it were better to remain a lonely maiden all my life than take up with such pitiful company as some of your good matrons do, and rather more respectable too.

Lady G. No, child; a married woman is always more respectable than a single one, let her be married to whom she will.

Miss Martin. Indeed! Can one give to another what he is not possess'd of himself? Can a woman receive any additional respectability because some drivelling, insignificant man, whom all the world despises, has put a wedding-ring upon her finger!—ha! ha! ha! But I suppose a good settlement is the honour your Ladyship means.

Lady G. No, indeed: I say, every married woman is more respectable than a single one, independently of all settlements. What else do you think would have induced me, with the fortune I had, to marry Sir Benjamin Goodbody? for his person was disagreeable, and his best friends admitted he was no conjurer. Don't mistake me, however, I mean no disrespect to his memory. He was a very good man, and I have lamented him sincerely. And what else do you think would have

induced my cousin Frances to give her hand to that poor puny creature, Mr. Perewinkle, but to place herself in this respectable state.

Miss Martin. Ha! ha! ha! I did not expect to hear such strong examples quoted from my own family.

Lady G. Don't make a jest of it: I speak seriously, and you ought to think seriously.

Miss Martin. I think very seriously, that, if you would not pester me continually with attempts to make up a match for me with every man of fortune that falls in our way, I should be very happy, my dear aunt, to live still with you, and take care of your declining years, in return for the tenderness and attention you have bestowed on my youth. Why would you put me away from you? are you tired of my company?

Lady G. Oh, Mary! talk not of taking care of my declining years: I should be contented to be crippled or bed-ridden all my life, could I but see you happily and honourably married.

Miss Martin. (*kissing* Lady Goodbody's *hand tenderly.*) My dear aunt! pardon my petulance and eagerness. I will strive to please you more: but do give up the present pursuit, I beseech you.

Lady G. No, no, my dear! I love you too well for that. But I am unfit to say any thing to you at present. [Exit.

Miss Martin. (*looking after her.*) My dear, kind, perverse aunt! you will be the death of me. (*To* Hannah.) Come, my dear, we'll retire to our rooms too. What have you been thinking of all this time?

Hannah. I have just been wondering whether my grandmother was christened Hannah or Hannabella.

Miss Martin. What puts that into your head?

Hannah. Because Mr. Worshipton said at dinner, when my aunt call'd me Hannah, that she should have call'd me Hannabella, which is a prettier name.

Miss Martin. Mr. Worshipton has been amusing himself.—Oh heigh ho! I wish we were at home again, in our old mansion in the north.

Enter Hopkins.

Hopkins. (*gently putting her hand on* Miss Martin's *shoulder*). My dear child! pardon the liberty: I still feel for you the affection of a dry nurse: what is the matter with you?

Miss Martin. Still the old grievance, my dear Hopkins; my aunt trying to make up a match for me.

Hopkins. Ay, poor good lady: she can't leave that alone for the soul of her. She would make up matches at home for every country girl in the neighbourhood if she could. I even believe, if I had not been once married already, which she thinks sufficient for the credit of any woman, she would still be for trying to make up a match for my old crazy bones, God help me!—But don't let it vex you thus, my dear ma'am: I have brought you something that will please and divert you.

Miss Martin. What is that, Hopkins?

Hopkins. A letter from my little boy whom my lady puts to school, written with his own hand, dear little fellow! and the first he ever wrote in his life. It begins "Dear Mother," and all as pretty as any other letter.

Miss Martin. I thank you, my good Hoppy! I shall indeed have a pleasure in reading it. Go with me to my room, and show it me there: it does my ill-humour good to see thee so happy; I will strive to think less of my own concerns. [Exeunt.

Scene II.—A small room leading to other rooms in the house: Jenkins discovered standing at one of the doors, behind which hang great coats, &c., beckoning to somebody who does not appear; presently

Enters Worshipton, stepping upon tiptoe.

Wor. Thou hast some intelligence for me? (*In a low voice.*)

Jen. Yes; the old lady and her woman are coming this way presently to go to Miss Martin's room, and the heiress will follow them as soon as she can find a glove that she is searching for. I heard this just now as I listen'd at her door; so conceal yourself here amongst these great coats for a few minutes, and you may way-lay her as she passes. (*Speaking in a half whisper.*)

Wor. Is my uncle still reading in the next chamber?

Jen. I believe so. (*Going to a door at the bottom of the stage, and listening.*) He is just now rising to go away. (Worshipton *shrinks back, and is going hastily out.*) No, no! don't be afraid; he is gone out the other way to visit old Rycroft, I suppose.

Wor. (*speaking in a loud voice.*) Good then: we shall have the coast clear: let us hide ourselves. Thou must remain with me, for I may have occasion for thee.

(*Hide themselves amongst the great coats.*)

Enter Lady Goodbody and Hopkins, talking as they enter.

Lady G. (*in rather a low voice.*) Very true, Hopkins, and if my god-daughter turns out an industrious girl, I'll add something to what she saves, myself, to get her a husband; for you know she is not very sightly.

Hopkins. (*in a loud voice, having lingered some paces behind to pick up something she has dropt.*) Ay, there is plenty of husbands to be had my Lady, tho' a girl be ever so homely, if she have but money enough. [Exeunt Lady Goodbody *and* Hopkins.

Wor. (*behind the door.*) Ay, they are talking of their heiress now. They are devilishly suspicious of designs upon her, but we'll jockey them for all that. Ha! here comes the game

Enter HANNAH, (and WORSHIPTON comes from his concealment.)

Hannah. O la! are you there, Mr. Worshipton? I saw nobody here but the great coats hanging by the wall.

Wor. You are not offended, I hope, that a great coat should be turned into something that can speak to you, and gaze upon you, and admire you, Miss Clodpate.

(*Ogling her.*)

Hannah. La, now! it is so droll!

Jen. (*peeping from his hiding-place.*) Droll enough, by my faith!

Wor. I have been waiting here concealed a long time for this happiness; for your aunt is so jealous I can find no opportunity of speaking to you. She knows well enough it is impossible to behold such beauty and attraction without———pardon me: you know very well what I would say to you if I durst.

Hannah. La, no! how should I know. Do you mean that I am beautiful, and what d'ye call it?

Wor. Indeed I do: your beauty must be admired, tho' your prudent aunt does all she can to conceal it.

Hannah. La, now! you say so because my hair has been allowed to grow so long, and aunt and every body says that my ears are the prettiest thing about me. But it an't aunt's fault: I shall have it cut when we go to town. (*Putting her hair behind her ears awkwardly with her fingers, and beginning to look rather brisk.*)

Wor. (*looking at them with affected admiration.*) O, beautiful indeed!

Jen. (*peeping from his hiding-place.*) Ay, I thought the beauty lay hid under some snug covert or other: it was devilishly well conceal'd, by my faith!

Hannah. La, now! did you think they were as pretty as they are?

Wor. I must confess I should have expected to find them somewhat of a longer shape. But conceal them for pity's sake, my charming Hannah: this is dangerous.

Hannah. Hannabella, you know.

Wor. O yes, Hannabella I mean. It is dangerous to look upon so much beauty, when one at the same time thinks of the extraordinary accomplishments of your mind.

Hannah. La, now! who has told you that I got by heart six whole parts of the hundred and nineteenth psalm, word for word, in the space of two mornings only, and every body said it was very extraordinary? Somebody has told it you, I know.

Wor. No, nobody; I just found it out myself.

Hannah. La, now! that is so wonderful! Aunt herself said that my cousin Martin could not have done it so well.

Wor. Your cousin Martin! would any one compare you together? Don't you know how much every body is delighted with you?

Hannah. La, no! nobody tells me any thing about it.

Wor. Indeed! that is very extraordinary: but they have their own ends in that. Don't they watch you, and keep always somebody near you?

Hannah. To be sure my aunt often desires my cousin to take care of me when we go out.

Wor. I thought so.—Ah! my charming Hannabella! (*Sighs two or three times, but she continues staring vacantly, without taking any notice of it.*)

Jen. (*aside to* Worshipton *as he walks near his hiding place, rather at a loss what to do.*) Give a good heavy grunt, sir, and she'll ask what's the matter with you: mere sighing is no more to her than the blowing of your nose.

Wor. (*ogling* Hannah *and giving a groan.*) Oh! oh!

Hannah. La! what is the matter with you? have you the stomach ach? My aunt can cure that.

Wor. Nay, my dear Hannabella, it is yourself that must cure me. I have got the heart-ach. It is your pity I must implore. (*Kneeling and taking her hand.*)

Hannah. O, sure now! to see you kneeling so—it is so droll! I don't know what to say, it is so droll.

Wor. Say that you will be mine, and make me happy; there is nothing a lover can do, that I will not do to please you.

Hannah. Miss Languish's lover made songs upon her.

Wor. I'll do so too, or any thing: but don't let your aunt know that I have spoken to you, she would be so angry.

Hannah. O no! she is very fond of people being married.

Wor. Yes, but she will be angry at us tho'; so don't tell her, nor Miss Martin, nor any body a word of the matter. Do promise this, my charming Hannabella! my life depends upon it. (*Kneeling again, and taking her hand.*) O don't pull away from me this fair hand!

Hannah. La! I'm sure I an't pulling it away.

Wor. (*starting up suddenly from his knees.*) There's somebody coming. (*Runs out and leaves* Hannah *strangely bewildered, and not knowing where to run.*)

Hannah. O dear, dear! what shall I do?

Enter HOPKINS.

Hopkins. What is the matter, Miss Clodpate? My Lady sent me to see what is become of you: are you frightened for any thing, that you keep standing here in such a strange manner?

Hannah. O la, no! but I just thought somehow, that you would think there was somebody with me. (Hopkins *looks about the room suspiciously.*) O no: you need not look for any body: those are only great coats by the

wall, you see; and Mr. Worshipton's an't there, you see; for his has got five capes to it, and the cloth is of a much lighter colour, and it has got more button-holes to it too than any body's else in the house.

Hopkins. (*still staring strangely about.*) Mr. Worshipton's! was he here?

Hannah. La, no! an't I just telling you that he an't here?

Hopkins. (*aside.*) Well this is droll enough too—but no, no! it can't be any thing neither. (*aloud.*) Your aunt is impatient for you, Miss Clodpate.

Hannah. O la! I'm going to her directly.

[Exeunt Hannah *and* Hopkins.

Jen. (*coming forward from his hiding place, and shrugging up his shoulders as he looks after* Hannah.) This is the price my master is willing to pay for his curricle and his horses.

Re-enter Worshipton.

Wor. I think we have done pretty well, Jenkins, for the first onset.

Jen. Yes to be sure, sir; but—but—

Wor. But what, Jenkins?

Jen. Pardon my freedom, sir:—but don't you think she is rather too great a fool for——

Wor. Poh! poh! poh! she is all the better for that: it is a great advantage, and one that I am certain of.

Jen. As to the certainty of it nobody will dispute that, I believe.

Wor. Don't trouble thy head about it, if I'm satisfied. And remember the caution I gave you to say nothing, in the way of asking questions at the servants, to lead them to suspect what we are about.

Jen. Don't be afraid of that, sir: I can't if I would; for the man-servant that attends them is a country booby, who has not been in the family a fortnight, and knows nothing at all about it; and my Lady's woman, with her staunch old-fashion'd notions, has taken such a dislike to me that I hate to have any thing to say to her.

Wor. So much the better. Yes, yes! things will go swimmingly on: I shall soon jockey them all. [Exeunt.

Scene III.—A chamber all littered over with books, papers, old coats, shoes, &c. &c. Amaryllis discovered sitting by a table with a pen in his hand, and paper before him. After musing some time, he writes and then blots out what he has written.

Amaryllis. (*to himself.*) This won't do: it does not sound well. What a teasing thing it is, when one has got a beautiful line, to be stopp'd thus for want of a good rhyme to couple with it! (*repeating with great emphasis and gesticulation.*)

"On thy ideal pinions let me fly,
" High-soaring Fancy, far above the sky:
" Beyond the starry sphere towering sublime,
" Where vulgar thought hath never dar'd to—

No, climb does not please me: it is too heavy a motion for thought. (*Musing and rubbing his forehead.*)

" Beyond all thought inspiring vulgar rhyme."

No, that won't do neither. (*Musing again and biting his nails.*) Pest take it! if I should bite my fingers to the quick it won't come to me. (*A gentle knock at the door.*) Who's there? (*in an angry voice.*)

Dolly. (*half opening the door.*) 'Tis I, sir: does your fire want coals?

Amaryllis. (*in a softened voice.*) O, it is you, Dolly. Come in and see, my good girl. *Enter* Dolly, *and pretends to be busy in putting the room in order, whilst* Amaryllis *takes his pen and begins several times to write, but as often lays it down again, looking at the same time over his shoulder at her.*) Plague take it! she puts it all out of my head. (*Leans his arm on the table for some time, still looking frequently about to her.*) Faith, I believe she has a sneaking kindness for me, she finds always so many little things to do in my room. She's a good, rosy, tight girl, on my soul! (*Aside.*) No, my pretty Dolly, that book is too heavy for you: I'll put it in its place. (*Getting up with great animation and running to her.*)

Dolly. O no, sir! I'll do it very well myself. I just thought as how your room would be in confusion, and so——

Amaryllis. And so you came to put my head into confusion too, you little baggage.

Dolly. O sure! I hope not, sir.

Amaryllis. You're a sly gipsy, Dolly. But you think of me sometimes then, eh? (*Pinching her ear and patting her cheek.*)

Wor. (*without.*) Amaryllis! Amaryllis! are you at home, Amaryllis?

Amaryllis *runs back to his table again, and pretends to be writing, without attending to the inkstand and several books which he oversets in his haste, whilst* Dolly *makes her escape by the opposite door just as* Worshipton *enters.*)

Wor. I heard you were at home, so I made bold to enter. What, writing so composedly after all this devil of a noise?

Amaryllis. (*looking up with affected apathy.*) Yes, I believe the cat has been playing her gambols amongst my books.

Wor. It may have been the cat, to be sure, for those creatures have witchcraft about them, and can do many wonderful things o' winter nights, as my old nurse used to tell me; but if you had told me it was half a dozen of dogs that made such a noise, I should scarcely have believed you. Cats too can put on what forms they please, I've been told; and tho' they generally assume that of an old woman, yours has been more civil to you, I believe, in taking the more agreeable form of a

young one. I caught a glimpse of her, Amaryllis, as she fled into the other chamber.

Amaryllis. Poh! Dolly has been putting my books in order: is she gone? (*Pretending to look round for her.*)

Wor. Well, well, never mind it! I came on a little business to you, else I should have been sorry to disturb you; for I know well enough you are always employed about some sublime thing or other.

Amaryllis. You are too flattering.—You come upon business?

Wor. Yes, Amaryllis, and you are so good-natured, that I shan't make any preamble about it. I want to please a lady, or make a lady believe I am pleased with her, which is the same thing, you know; and I want to borrow one of your poems that I may present it to her as written in praise of herself. However, she is not very refined in her taste, any common-place thing will do.

Amaryllis. I am infinitely flatter'd, Mr. Worshipton, that you should apply to me for a common-place thing. Since this is the style of poetry that suits you at present, I can't help thinking you might have succeeded pretty well in writing it yourself.

Wor. Poh, now! you don't take my meaning. I meant any little piece that has cost you little time or study, will do very well for my purpose: I should be very sorry to take one of your good ones.

Amaryllis. Sir, I have bestowed some time and study upon all my pieces, and should be rather unwilling to think I had any other to offer you.

Wor. How perverse you are in misunderstanding me! The best poet that ever lived has a best and a worst poem; and I only make the humble request to have one of your least sublime ones. Do, my dear friend, look thro' your budget. Many of your works, I know, are master-pieces, and I have had a great desire for a long time to hear you read some of them, but was unwilling to disturb you of an evening.

Amaryllis. (*softened.*) I believe I must find something for you. Will you have a love-song or a sonnet?

Wor. Any of them will do: she does not know the one from the other.

Amaryllis. (*taking papers from his table.*) Here are verses addressed to Delia playing on the lute.

Wor. (*taking it.*) This will do very well; for tho' I don't believe she plays upon the lute, it will be civil to suppose that she does, till we really know the contrary.

Amaryllis. You speak lightly of the lady, Worshipton, for a lover.

Wor. I am not so refined in my ideas of these matters as you are, Amaryllis. I am a man of the world, and that character can't be supported long on a slender fortune: the lady is very rich.—But mum: not a word of this to any one.

Amaryllis. You may depend upon me.—But you said you should like to hear me read some of my poems. I am not very busy at present; I will indulge you with pleasure.

Wor. You are extremely obliging.—For a man pretty well received by women of the first circles, as I believe without vanity I may say of myself, it would be a silly trick to marry at all, did not my circumstances compel me to it; but I shall make such a choice of a wife as shall make me pass as much as possible for a single man still.

Amaryllis. (*impatiently.*) Very well!—I have a poem here which I think you will be pleased with.

Wor. You are very good indeed.—But you see how I am circumstanced: I must have fortune.—How foolish it was in the Marchioness of Edgemore to think I was going to elope with Lady Susan! I never paid more than common attention to her in my life. It is impossible for me to marry without fortune.

Amaryllis. (*still more impatient.*) Well that is all very true.—But here is a pastoral which you will not, I hope, find unworthy your attention, if you will have the goodness to give it me.

Wor. You are infinitely obliging; but I am extremely sorry my time will not allow me so great a pleasure.

Amaryllis. Then I'll read you this elegy, which is shorter.

Wor. I'm really obliged to you, but——

Amaryllis. Or perhaps you would like to hear my grand ode, which is in the next room. (*Runs to fetch it.*)

Wor. (*alone.*) How that man pesters one with his damned vanity. Shall I make my escape while he is gone? No, no! that would be too rude: I'll try another way of getting off.—Worshipton! Worshipton!

(*Calling out with a feigned voice.*)

Re-enter AMARYLLIS with his poem in his hand.

Amaryllis. Now, Worshipton, I'll show you what I believe, without vanity, I may call hitting off the figurative and sublime style in poetry, pretty well.

Wor. I beg pardon: I am extremely mortified, but I cannot possibly stay to hear it now, for Sir John waits without, calling for me, and I must positively go to him. Did you not hear him call very loud?

Amaryllis. O, if Sir John is without we can ask him in, and he shall hear it too.

(*Going towards the door.*)

Wor. (*stopping him eagerly.*) No, no, my good friend, not now. if you please: it is impossible: we shall hear you another time.

Amaryllis. I shall be at home all the evening; shall I expect you half an hour hence?

Wor. No, not quite so soon, I thank you; we shall be engaged. But we shall have great pleasure very soon—good bye to you.

(*Hurrying away.*)

Amaryllis. (*stopping him.*) In an hour

then, perhaps, I may expect you: I shall be at leisure all the evening.

Wor. Really you are most exceedingly obliging, but I am afraid it will not be in our power. Excuse my haste, I am very much disappointed. (*Going hastily.*)

Amaryllis. (*stopping him again.*) Nay, surely after supper you can contrive to come to me.

Wor. O, no, no! one has enough to do then to digest the horrible eating of this diabolical inn, without surfeiting one's self—I beg pardon! without giving one's self the pleasure, I meant to say, of———excuse me! excuse me! I must not keep him waiting any longer; you heard how loud he call'd me: I am extremely disappointed indeed.

[Exit, *breaking from him in great haste.*

Amaryllis. (*looking after him angrily.*) Well, let him go, pitiful fellow! he is so taken up with himself and his own little paltry vanity, he has neither capacity nor taste to relish high poetry. [Exit *very majestically.*

ACT III.

Scene I.—A dark narrow passage-room, with the door of an adjoining chamber left open, in which are discovered Lady Goodbody, Miss Martin, and Hannah.

Enter Sir John Hazelwood and Worshipton.

Sir John H. The light is gone out: let us wait here till David brings us another candle. Ha! is it fair to wait here? (*Perceiving the ladies.*)

Lady G. (*within to* Miss Martin.) Indeed, Mary, you ought to consider yourself as very fortunate in having the opportunity of pleasing an agreeable man.

Miss Martin. (*within.*) Mr. Worshipton do you mean?

Wor. (*in a low voice, stealing eagerly nearer the door.*) They are talking of me, dear creatures; let us hear what they have to say upon this subject.

Sir John H. Fye, Worshipton! would you turn eve-dropper?

Lady G. (*within.*) No, you know well enough it is Sir John I mean.

Sir John H. (*drawing also near the door.*) Ha! talking of me too. Well, if people will converse with their doors open, there is no help for it.

Miss Martin. (*within.*) How should I know who your Ladyship means by an agreeable man?

Lady G. You may know at least who I do not mean; for that poor frivolous fine gentleman can be agreeable to nobody.

Wor. (*aside to himself.*) Old hag! her face is as senseless and as coarse as a red-topped January turnip.

Lady G. (*within.*) Sir John is a man that any woman might like. He is a man of fortune.

Miss Martin. (*within.*) So is our neighbour, Squire Numbscull.

Lady G. (*within.*) Fye, child! Sir John is a well made man, and—

Miss Martin. (*within.*) And so I must like him for not being crooked.

Lady G. (*within.*) You are both perverse and foolish. Sir John—

Miss Martin. (*within earnestly.*) If you have any love for me, aunt, drop this subject forever: the very mention of his name is distressing to me.

Sir John H. (*in a low voice, turning from the door quickly.*) You need not be so vehement, fair lady: I have no intention to give you the smallest trouble.

Lady G. (*within.*) I leave you to your own humours, Miss Martin; you have got beyond all bearing with your nonsense.

[Exit *into an inner chamber.*

Sir John H. I thought her sensible, I confess; but how confoundedly pert and flippant she has become.

(*Aside on the front of the stage.*)

Wor. (*going to him conceitedly.*) You seem disturbed, Sir John.

Sir John H. Not a jot! not a jot, truly! It rather amuses me.

Enter David with a candle, holding his spread hand before it as if to prevent it from blowing out.

David. I should have brought the candle sooner, but I have but a short memory, your honour (*to* Sir John) and a man with a short memory, is like a—

Sir John H. No matter what he's like: go on with the light, and we'll follow thee. [Exit David, (*looking very foolish.*) That fellow has become nauseous with his similies. (*As they are going out* Worshipton *stops* Sir John.)

Wor. They speak again; do stop here a moment.

Hannah. (*within.*) Would it grieve you, cousin, if my aunt were to propose Mr. Worshipton to you instead of Sir John?

Miss Martin. (*within.*) No, my dear, not at all.

Wor. (*in a low voice.*) You see I am in favour with the niece, Sir John, tho' the aunt gives the preference to you.

Hannah. (*within.*) I thought as much, for he's a very pretty gentleman, isn't he?

Miss Martin. (*within*) He is even so.

Hannah. (*within.*) And he dresses so pretty and new fashion'd, don't he?

Miss Martin. (*within.*) It is very true.

Hannah. (*within.*) And then he talks so clever, like the fine captain that run off with Miss Money. He is as clever every bit, altho' he don't swear so much; an't he, Mary?

Miss Martin. (*within.*) I make no doubt of

it. And had Lady Goodbody laid her snare to catch him for me, it would not have grieved me at all.

Wor. (*in triumph.*) Do you hear that, Sir John?

Hannah. (*within.*) It would not have grieved you at all?

Miss Martin. (*within.*) No, my dear; for with all these precious qualities of his, his good or bad opinion is of no consequence to me. I could bear such a creature to suppose I have designs upon him, without being uneasy about the matter. (*Walking up and down disturbed, and then talking to herself.*) To appear to Sir John Hazelwood as a female fortune-hunter, endeavouring to draw in a wealthy husband for her own convenience—O, it is not to be endured! To be degraded in the eyes of the very man whose good opinion I should most value—it is enough to make one distracted! (Worshipton *retires behind*. Sir John *very foolishly, who remains fixed to the spot with surprise.*)

Hannah. (*within.*) Do you love Sir John?

Miss Martin. (*within.*) No, my dear, I am not weak enough to do that, when I know I shall never be beloved again. Could I have gained his good opinion, I should have been contented, without pretending to his heart.

Sir John H. (*vehemently.*) But thou shalt have both, by this blessed hour!

Miss Martin. (*within.*) But now, as my aunt carries on her attack, I don't know how to maintain my credit: I shall be compelled to be downrightly rude to him.

Sir John H. Ay, very right, very right, my brave girl!—It is a glorious girl! I adore her for her spirit.

Hannah. (*within.*) It gets very cold: I'll shut the door now, for the smoke is all gone.

Miss Martin. (*within.*) What, has the door been standing open all this while?

Hannah. (*within.*) Didn't you see me open it to let out the smoke?

Miss Martin. (*within.*) I am so harassed and vexed I don't see what is before mine eyes: shut it directly.

(Hannah *shuts the door.*)

Sir John H. We are dark now, but I hear David's footsteps in the passage. Poor fellow! I have affronted him. David! friend David! (*Calling.*)

Re-enter David with a light, looking very sour.

David. What do you want, sir?

Sir John H. To be lighted to our rooms, my good David.—Nay, don't look so grave, man. I spoke rather shortly to you, indeed, because I was thinking of something else at the time; but you are too wise, my good David, to mind such small trifles as these.

David. (*with his face brightening.*) Lord love you, sir! I have both given and taken short words ere now: that is nothing to me. But I wish I may remember to call your honour in the morning, for as I was a saying, a man with a short memory——

Sir John H. Yes, yes, let us have it all now, as we go along; and put this under your pillow to prevent you from over-sleeping yourself, my friend David.

(*Giving him money.*)

David. O Lord, sir, I can't refuse any thing your honour offers me, but there is no occasion for this.

Sir John H. Put it in your pocket, man: there is a virtue in it. (*They move on;* Sir John *following* David, *and* Worshipton *kicking his shins from side to side, with affected carelessness, as he goes after them.*)

Sir John H. (*archly turning as he goes out.*) Thou'rt making a strange noise with thy feet, Worshipton. [Exeunt.

Scene II.—Worshipton's Chamber.

Enter Worshipton, calling as he enters.

Wor. Jenkins! Jenkins!

Jen. (*without.*) Here, sir.

Enter Jenkins in his great coat and boots.

Wor. Are you ready to set off for this same license?

Jen. Yes, sir, in a moment.

Wor. Well, make good speed then: there is no time to lose. Remember all the directions and precautions I have given you: and think as thou goest along that thou art working for thyself as well as me, for thy services shall be nobly rewarded. Thou shalt have a slice out of Sir Rowland that will fatten thee up by and by into a man of some consequence. Good speed to thee, my good Jenkins! and use thy discretion in every thing.—Hast thou bespoke music for our serenade?

Jen. I have found a sorry fiddler, who has got but three strings to his violin, for the fourth is supplied by a bit of pack-thread; and an old Highland piper, who has stopped here on his way from London to Lochaber; besides a bear-leader, who is going about the country with his hurdy-gurdy.

Wor. Well, well! if they make but noise enough it will do. But the most important thing is to have the chaise in waiting behind the old mill, that while the music is dinning in the ears of the old lady and her woman, we may convey our prize to it without being suspected. Have you engaged Will in our interest? and does he say the road between this and Middleton church is now passable?

Jen. You may depend upon him, sir, and the road too.

Wor. Thou art sure I may depend upon him?

Jen. Sure of it, sir. He will do much, he says, to serve your honour, but he'll go thro' fire and water to vex the old beldame. Lady Goodbody he means: he owes her a turn, I believe, for a half-crown she scrubbed off him when she paid him for the last stage he drove her.

Wor. This is fortunate. Where is Sir John just now?

Jen. With old Rycroft: he always gives him his draughts with his own hand, lest it should be neglected.

Wor. Then I may go to the stable without danger, and have some conversation with Will myself. By the bye, I have never visited that old sick devil yet; do you tell him that I inquire for him sometimes?

Jenkins. I do, sir, and Rycroft don't expect more from you.

Wor. Very well, that is enough.—But we lose time. Here is money for thee: set off immediately.

[Jenkins *receives money and* Exit.

Wor. (*alone.*) If this succeeds now, it will be a devilish lucky turn in my fortune; for I should have found it a difficult matter to have lived much longer upon credit. (*Musing a while.*) I wish after all it were a less expensive thing to be a man of fashion. Gold, as the proverb says, may be bought too dear.—No, no: it can't be bought too dear by one who knows how to spend it with spirit. I shall, at least, have every thing my own way, for she is a great fool; that is one good thing we are sure of. [Exit.

Scene III.—A passage or outer room.

Enter Sir John Hazelwood, looking eagerly to the opposite side of the stage.

Sir John H. Here comes a lady, but not the one I'm in wait for.

Enter Hannah.

Sir John H. Good morning, Miss Clodpate, I hope your morning dreams have not been unpleasant: you are early up.

Hannah. I mistook the hour when the clock struck, for it is a queer-sounding clock they have here, and don't strike at all like the one we have at home.

Sir John H. Good young ladies like every thing at home best.

Hannah. Yes indeed I do, for it was made by Mr. Pendlam, the great clock-maker in London. Isn't he clock-maker to the king?

Sir John H. Indeed I don't know ma'am —But what pretty gloves you have got, Miss Clodpate; aren't they of a particular colour?

Hannah. La! do you think them pretty? My aunt says they are not pretty, but I think they are, and that was the reason why I bought them.

Sir John H. And an excellent one too, madam. Pray when did you see your worthy father, Sir Rowland? I hope he enjoys as good spirits as he used to do long ago?

Hannah. I saw him the twenty-fourth of last September, and he was very well, I thank you, sir.

Sir John H. Does he never leave home now?

Hannah. O, there is Miss Martin coming; I must go away.

Sir John H. And why must you go?

Hannah. Because my aunt says——in case you should have any thing to say to her.

Sir John H. You are perfectly right to do whatever your aunt desires you.

[Exit Hannah.

Enter Miss Martin by the opposite side, Sir John looking at her with great satisfaction as she approaches. She curtsies slightly, continuing to pass on.

Sir John H. Good morning, madam.

Miss Martin. Good morning, sir.

Sir John H. Do you pass me so hastily, Miss Martin? To run away so were enough to put it into a vain person's head to believe himself dangerous.

Miss Martin. Perhaps then, yours is not without that idea.

Sir John H. Yet I ought not to be flatter'd by it neither; for women, it is said, fly from small dangers, and encounter the greater more willingly.

Miss Martin. Yes, Sir John, we are the reverse of the men in this respect, which accounts likewise for your detaining me here.

Sir John H. Nay, in this you are mistaken: it is no mean danger that proves my boldness at this moment. (*Placing himself between her and the door gayly.*)

Miss Martin. Your boldness indeed is obvious enough, whatever I may think of your courage.—But I have no particular desire to pass this way: I can find out my way to the breakfast-room by another door, if you have any fancy for standing sentry at this post.

(*Turning to go by another door.*)

Sir John H. (*quitting the door.*) And you will leave me thus scornfully. There is an old proverb I could repeat about woman's scorn.

Miss Martin. I know your old proverb perfectly well, Sir John; and I am obliged to you for mentioning it at present, since it sets me completely at liberty, without ill manners, to say, I am heartily tired of this parley.

[Exit *with affected carelessness.*

Sir John H. Well, this is strange enough! she will charm me, I believe, with every thing that is disagreeable to me: for I dislike a gay woman, I can't endure a talking one, and these kind of snip-snap answers I detest. —But I have been too particular in my notions about these matters: I have always been too severe upon the women:—I verily believe they are better kind of creatures than I took them for.——Softly, however! I will observe her well before I declare myself.

[Exit.

Enter Amaryllis, with a coat in his hand, and dressed in his night-gown.

Amaryllis (*alone.*) What a plague is the matter with the string of my bell this morning that it won't ring! I wish my Dolly would come and brush this coat for me. (*Listening.*) I hear her voice coming up stairs; she'll be here immediately.—This girl becomes every day more pleasing and more necessary to me. Ever since I entered this house she has aired

my linen, set my slippers by the fire in a morning (or, good soul! she heard me complain that I am troubled with a chillness in my feet), and done all those little kindly offices about me with such a native grace as beggars all refinement.—But what, indeed, are the embellishments of artful manners to the graces of simple unadorned nature?—She is at hand.—Dolly! my sweet Dolly!

(*Calling to her.*)

Dolly. (*without.*) Coming, sir.

Amaryllis. There is something of natural harmony in the very tones of her voice.

Dolly. (*without, in a sharp angry key.*) Get down to the kitchen, you vile abominable cur! Do you think I have nothing to do but mop the stairs after your dirty feet? Get down to the kitchen with you! (*The howling of a dog heard without.*) Yes, yes, howl away there! I'll break every bone in your skin, if you come this way again, that I will.

Enter Dolly.

Amaryllis. Why Dolly, my good girl, this is rather an unpretty way of talking.

Dolly. 'Tis but the dog, sir. Vile, nasty hound! he is worser than his master.

Amaryllis. Than his master?

Dolly. Yes, than his master, Mr. Worshipton. His dog's tricks are like his own, for he don't care what trouble he gives to a poor servant.

Amaryllis. So you don't love Mr. Worshipton, Dolly? Should you have treated a dog of mine so, eh? (*pinching her cheek kindly.*) You smile at that question, you gipsy; I know you would not.

Dolly. I should indeed have had some more regard for the brute, so as he had belonged to your honour.

Amaryllis. I thank you, my sweet girl; but you ought to speak gently to every thing.—And don't call me "your honour." I don't like to hear my pretty Dolly call me so.

Dolly. O daisy! what shall I call you then?

Amaryllis. Call me Sir, or Mr. Amaryllis, or when you would be very kind to me, my dear Mr. Amaryllis.

Dolly. My dear Mr. Amarals.

Amaryllis. Amaryllis is my name, Dolly.

Dolly. Yes, yes! I know your name is Amarals.

Amaryllis. No, child, Amaryllis.—But you'll pronounce it better by and by. And if my Dolly will take this coat and brush it for me, when she brings it to my chamber again, I have something to say to her in private which will not, I hope, be displeasing to her. [Exit, *looking tenderly at her.*

Dolly. (*alone.*) What can he have to say to me now? Ods dickens! I'll wager he means to buy me a new gown.—Faith! he means some other thing, perhaps. Well, if he were not so much taken up with his books, and his papers, and his poetry, and such trash, I should like mightily to keep a maid of my own, and be call'd Mrs. Amarals.—I'll bring it to this if I can. (*Going out with the coat.*) He shall brush his own coat then, howsomever.

[Exit.

ACT IV.

Scene I.—Moon-light: a field or small court behind the inn, and every thing covered with snow.

Enter Fiddler, Piper, and Hurdy-Gurdy-Man, each with his instrument.

Fiddler. How devilish cold 'tis! 'tis well we are fortified with roast beef and brandy, friend: didn't I tell you we should want it all?

(*To* Piper.)

Piper. Very true: but you would not keep a lady of family and condition waiting till we cramm'd ourselves, Maister John.

Hurdy-Gurdy-Man. Dat would be impolite in verite.

Fiddler. Damn me! if I would play with an empty stomach to the best lady in Christendom. What the devil makes her fancy that our music will sound better in this here cold field than within doors in such a night as this? I likes to be snug myself, and I never likes to put any one to hardship.

Piper. Why thou art a good-humour'd, kindly-hearted fellow, John; I must say that for thee. But this is the true way for all love music, di na ye ken? Out among the high rocks, or under a castle-wall, man!—But now, as we are all to play thegether, as it were in a concert (*taking out his snuff-box, and rapping on the lid with an air of importance,*) di na ye think, gentlemen, it will be expedient to inquire first, whether we can play the same tunes or not, as I suppose none of us trouble ourselves with music-books, and sick like.

Fiddler. I can play a pretty many tunes, Piper, but none of them all goes so well on my fiddle as Ally Croaker.

Piper. Ay that is good enough in town to play to an orange-woman under a lamp-post, or sick like; but this is a lady of family, man, and she must have something above the vulgar.

Fiddler. Play any thing you please, then: it will be all the same thing in my day's work whether I play one thing or another.

Piper. Day's work, man! you talk about playing on your fiddle as a cobler would do about mending of shoes. No, no! we'll do the thing decently and creditably.

Hurdy-Gurdy-Man. Suppose we do give her de little chanson d 'amour?

Piper. Song a moor! what's that?

Hurdy-Gurdy-Man. I do play it very pretty on my hurdy-gurdy.

Piper. Ay, you ma' play it well enough, perhaps, for your Italian foreigners, or sick like, that don't know any better; but any body that has been in Lochabar, good troth! would count it no better than jargon, man.

Hurdy-Gurdy-Man. But I do say when de

peoples of my country hear your pipe, dey do so. (*Stopping his ears, and mimicking one who runs away.*) And I do say dat I play more better music dan you, one, two, ten, twe nty times over.

Piper. Lord help ye, man! it's lang sin pride began: will ye compare yourself to the Laird of McRory's piper.

Fiddler. A great affair to be sure of the Laird of McRory's piper?

Piper. You mun eat a bow o' meal before you be like him tho'.

Fiddler. Thank God! I have more christian-like victuals to eat.

Piper. Better than you or your grandfather either, ha' been glad o' worse fare.

Fiddler. Yes, that may be the case in your country, like enough where, unless it be a lousy tailor, or sick like (*mimicking him,*) few of you taste any thing that has ever had life in it.

Piper. Sir, an' it were not for respect to the lady yonder (*pointing to the window where* Hannah *appears,*) I would run this dirk into that nasty bulk of yours, and let out some of the plum-pudding you pretend to be stuffed with, you swine that you are!

Fiddler. O never mind the lady, Master McRory; I'll box you for two-pence. (*Putting himself in a boxing posture.*)

Piper. Done, sir, for half the money. (*Puting himself in the same posture.*)

Hurdy-Gurdy-Man. Dese men very foolish: my hurdy-gurdy and I be but strangers in dis country: we will keep out of de way. (*Retiring to a corner of the stage.*)

Enter Worshipton and Jenkins.

Wor. Hold, hold! what is all this for? I hired you to give us harmony and not discord, and be damn'd to you!

Fiddler. You shall have that too, an' please your honour.

Wor. But I want no more than I bargained for, so keep this for some other occasion, if you please.

Fiddler. (*giving up.*) Well, it don't signify, I can pick a quarrel with him another time.

Piper. (*to* Fiddler.) Since the gentleman desires it, sir, I shall let you alone for this time; but damn you, sir, if you say a word against my country again, I'll make you a man of no country at all. (*They take up their instruments, and go to different sides of the stage, still making signs of defiance to one another.*

Wor. (*going to the window.*) Are you there, my charming love?

Hannah. Yes, I have been here some time.

Wor. I could not come sooner.—Remember your promise; and in the mean time what music shall they play?

Hannah. Just let them play a concert.

Wor. A concert.—Well, gentlemen, you are desired to play a concert.

Fiddler. That is to say, we are all to play together. What shall we play? (*to* Piper.) Shall we play the Lady's Fancy?

Piper. A custock for the Lady's Fancy.

Fiddler. The Soldier's Delight then?

Piper. A —— for the Soldier's Delight! a tune for a two-penny alehouse.

Hurdy-Gurdy-Man. Don't mind him (*to* Fiddler.) he be washpish: you and I will play Ma chere Amie.

Piper. Well, well! play what you please, both of you, but I'll play the battle of Killy Cranky, and hang me, if your "Ah Me" will be heard any more than the chirping of a cricket in the hearth. (*They begin to play, and the* Piper *drowns them both with his noise.*)

Wor. (*stopping his ears.*) Give over! give over! bless my soul! the squeaking of a hundred pigs and the sow-driver at their heels is nothing to this. (*Going to the window.*)—Well, my love, how did you like the concert?

Hannah. (*above.*) Very well, I thank you.

Wor. (*aside.*) A lady of precious taste! (*aside.*) But would it not be better to hear them one at a time? Which of them shall I desire to play first? (*aloud.*)

Hannah. (*above.*) Bid that fiddler there, without the breeches, play me a tune on his bagpipes.

Piper. I must let you to wit, madam, that I am no fiddler, and the meanest man of all the McRorys would scorn to be a fiddler. My father before me was piper to the laird, and my grandfather was piper to the Highland Watch at the siege of Quibec; and if he had not piped long and well to them, madam, there wad ha' been less French blood spilt that day, let me tell you that, madam.

Wor. My good Mr. McRory, she meant you no offence; I assure you she respects your grandfather very much. Do oblige us with a tune on your bagpipes. (Piper *makes a profound bow, and standing by the side scene, half concealed, plays a Highland pee-bro.*)

Wor. (*to* Piper.) I thank you, sir; your music is excellent: it is both martial and plaintive.—But where is our little warbler?—Ha! here she comes.

Enter Sally.

Come, my good girl, can you sing the song I gave you?

Sally. Yes, sir.

Wor. Let us have it then.

SONG.

Ah, Celia, beauteous, heavenly maid!
In pity to thy shepherd's heart,
Thus by thy fatal charms betray'd,
The gentle balm of hope impart.

Ah! give me hope in accents sweet,
Sweet as thy lute's melodious strain;
I'll lay my laurels at thy feet,
And bless the hour that gave me pain.

Wor. Very well sung, indeed. (*To* Hannah.)

Don't you think, my charming Hannah, we have had music enough?

Hannah. Just as you please: I don't care.

Wor. I'll send them off then. (*to* Jenkins, *who comes forward.*) Take them all to the other side of the house, and make them play under Miss Martin's window. You understand. (*Aside.*)

Jenkins. Yes, sir. [Exeunt Jenkins *and music, and enter* Will, *who retires to a corner of the stage.*

Wor. (*to* Hannah.) How did you like my song, Hannabella?

Hannah. Very well, but la! it an't the song you promised to make upon me: it don't say one word about either you or I.

Wor. Ay, but it does tho'; for you are Celia, and I am the shepherd, and that is the fashion of love-songs.

Hannah. Well, that is so droll!

Wor. So it is.—And now, my dearest creature, fulfil your promise, and come over the window to me; the postchaise is waiting for us.

Hannah. La! is it the yellow chaise that stands commonly in the yard?

Wor. I can't tell you what colour it is, but it carries us off to be married. Come over the window, my love.

Hannah. La! I didn't promise to go over the window: Aunt says they never do good who get over the window to be married: I only promised to run off with you.

Wor. But that is just the same thing. Do come now; there is no time to be lost. You have only to set your foot upon that stone which jets out from the wall, and you are in my arms in an instant.

Hannah. No, no! old aunt Gertrude went over the window to be married, and she fell and broke her leg, and never was married at all.

Wor. But you can't break your leg here, the wall is so low.—Come, come, there is no time to lose.

Hannah. O no, no! I know I shall come to harm.

Wor. Do, my dearest Hannabella, there is not the least danger. (*In a coaxing tone of voice.*)

Hannah. O no, no! aunt Gertrude broke her leg, and I'm sure I shall break mine too.

Wor. (*losing all patience.*) Damn your aunt Gertrude, and all the fools of the family! I'll give you leave to cut my head off if you fall.

Hannah. I'll go away, I won't stay here to be damned. (*Whimpering, and turning from the window.*)

Wor. Forgive me, my love; don't go away: I'll do any thing to please you.—What the devil shall we do?

Will. (*coming forward.*) Don't press the lady to get over the window, sir; I'll find a way of getting her out at the door, which I shall explain to you afterwards.

Wor. But her chamber enters thro' the old lady's; so how can you get her out?

Will. By unkennelling the old lady, to be sure; I'll do that fast enough.

Wor. (*to* Hannah.) Then wait in your chamber, my dearest creature, till we come for you. (*Aside as he goes off with* Will.)—What a devil of a fool it is! who could have thought she would have been so obstinate.

[Exeunt.

Scene II.—A small hall, with the doors of several rooms opening into it.

Enter Worshipton, and Will with a candle and burnt paper in his hand.

Will. (*thrusting the burnt paper under one of the doors.*) Now, my good Lady Charity! I'll be even with you for the half-crown you saved off me.—She'll smell the burning soon enough, I warrant ye; for your notable ladies, like her, poke their noses into every corner, and get out of bed at every little noise, to see that no rat be running off with one of their old shoes.—Do you go, please your honour, and wait at that door there, which is the only one that opens to the stair case, and I'll send the young lady to you immediately. You told her our plan?

Wor. Yes, I returned to the window, and told her.

Will. I have procured a trusty lad to drive in my place, and you'll find every thing as you ordered it.

Wor. I thank you, my good fellow: I'll make your fortune for this.

Will. I know your honour is a noble-minded gentleman. [Exit Worshipton.

Will (*alone, listening at the door.*) Yes, yes, she smells it now: I hear her stirring. (*Bawling very loud.*) Fire! fire! fire! The house is on fire! Fire! fire! fire!

Enter Lady Goodbody in her night-clothes, followed by Hannah.

Lady G. Mercy on us! how strong I smell it here! Where are all the servants? Call every body up. (Exit Hannah *by the staircase door.*) Is that the way out? Stay, Hannah, and take me with you.

Will. Your Ladyship had better take hold of my arm, and I'll take you safe out.

Lady G. Do take me out! do take me out! Fire! fire! fire! Is there nobody coming to us? (*Takes hold of* Will's *arm, who staggers along with her first to one side of the stage, and then to the other.*) Why, what are you about, fellow? I'll get better along by myself.

Will. Never fear! never fear! I'll warrant I'll take care of your Ladyship.

Lady G. Why don't you go faster then? Let go my arm, I say. Is the fellow mad or drunk?

Will. I'll take care of your Ladyship. Old ladies are often a stumbling: take good care of your feet, madam.

Lady G. Look to your own feet, fool! and let me alone. The man's distracted! let go my arm, I say. (*She struggles to get free: he keeps fast hold of her, and hobbles zig-zag over the stage, she all the while calling out fire, till they get to the stair-case door, where he falls down with his body right across the door to prevent its opening, as if he were in a fit.*) Heaven preserve us! the man's in a fit, and the door won't open. Who's there? Fire! fire! fire!

Enter LANDLADY and DOLLY.

Landlady. Fire in my house, mercy on us! how strong it smells here. O lud! lud! I'm a ruin'd woman! Where can it have broke out? O lud! lud!

Dolly. Lack-a-daisy! I smell it over head. I'll pawn my life it is in the north garret, where my new gown lies. O dear! O dear!

Landlady (*running distractedly about.*) Fire! fire! Water! water! will nobody assist a poor ruined woman? Oh, all my good furniture! Oh, my new dimity bed!

Enter SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD in his night-gown.

Sir John H. Confound your new dimity bed. Where is Miss Martin?

Lady G. O my child! my child! where is my child?

Sir John H. I'll go for her.—But here she comes: all's well now; let it burn as it will. (*Enter* Miss Martin, *and* Sir John *runs eagerly up to her, but stops short suddenly.*) My old sick fellow is in bed, and can't stir a limb to save himself; I must carry him out in my arms. (*Going hastily out, but is stopped by* Amaryllis, *who enters grotesquely dressed in his nightcap.*)

Amaryllis. Where are you going? where has it broke out?

Landlady. O lud, sir! it is broke out up stairs, and all my goods will be burnt. Who will assist a poor ruin'd woman?

Amaryllis. There is no fire up stairs, I assure you, but I smell it here.

Landlady. Then it is down stairs, and we shall all be burnt before we can get out. (*They all crowd about the staircase door.*) Raise that great fellow there.

Lady G. He's in a strong hystericks fit.

Dolly. Give him a kick 'o the guts, and that will cure his extericks.

Sir John H. A hasty remedy, gentle maiden. (Sir John *and* Amaryllis *lift* Will *neck and heels from the door.*)

Enter DAVID from the stair-case.

David. Who stopped the door there? what's all this bustle for?

Landlady. O, David, David! isn't there fire below stairs, David?

David. Yes, as much as will roast an egg, if you blow it well.

Landlady. Nay, but I'm sure the house is on fire, for I dreamt this very night that Pompey's whelp was gnawing a hole in my apron, and that bodes me no good. I'll go and look all over the house. Come, Doll.

[EXEUNT Landlady *and* Dolly.

Sir John H. (*to* Amaryllis.) We had better search too.

[EXEUNT Sir John *and* Amaryllis.

David. What's the matter with Will?

Lady G. He's in a strong fit

David. I never knew him in one before: I'm afraid he's dead, poor fellow! What will become of old Grizel his mother now? He gave the best half of his earnings to keep her out of the workhouse.

Lady G. Did he indeed! good young man! Run and get assistance for him. But, happen what will, old Grizel shan't go to the workhouse, for I'll take care of her myself. Haste, good David! run for the apothecary directly. (EXIT David.) Go, Mary, fetch me some drops from my room. (EXIT Miss Martin.) Poor young man!

Will. (*getting up, and falling on his knees to* Lady Goodbody.) O, my good blessed lady! I'm a Jew, and a Turk, and a Judas Iscariot. I have played the knave with you all this while out of spite. If I had not been a beast I might have known that you were a main good, charitable lady.—But I'll fetch her back again: I'll run to the world's end to serve you.

Lady G. You are raving, I fear: who will you fetch back?

Will. The great heiress, your niece, madam, who is run off to marry Mr. Worshipton, and all by my cursed contrivance too.

Lady G. The great heiress, my niece!

Will. Yes, my lady; your niece, Miss Clodpate: but I'll fetch her back again, tho' every bone in my skin should be broken.

Lady G. This is strange, indeed! (*Considering a while.*) No, no, young man, don't go after her: she is of age, and may do as she pleases.

Will. Ods my life, you are the best good lady alive! I'll run and tell my old mother what a lady you are.

Lady G. Nay, I'll go and see her myself; I may be able to make her situation more comfortable, perhaps.

Will. (*bursting into tears.*) Thank you, madam! Heaven knows I thank you! but as long as I have health and these two hands, I'll take care of her who took care of me before I could take care of myself.

Lady G. You are a good young man, I see, and I have a great mind to take care of you both. She has brought you soberly up, I hope, and taught you to read your Bible.

Will. O Lord, madam! old Grizel can't read a word herself, but many a time she desires me to be good—and so I will: hang me if I don't read the Bible from beginning to end, hard names and altogether!

Lady G. Come into the parlour with me: you must tell me more of this story of Mr. Worshipton and my niece.

Re-enter MISS MARTIN with the drops.

Miss Martin. I sought them every where, and thought I should never——

Lady G. We don't want them now; carry them back again. [EXEUNT Lady Goodbody *and* Will *by one side, and* Miss Martin *by the other.*

SCENE III.—THE INN YARD, WITH THE STABLE-DOOR IN FRONT, AT WHICH WILL APPEARS, AS IF READY TO SADDLE A HORSE.

Enter AMARYLLIS.

Amaryllis I hear, Will, you are going by Lady Goodbody's orders to desire the young couple to return to her from church: I should be much obliged to you if you would take Dorothea behind you, for she has got some business in the village this morning, and there is no conveyance for her unless you take her up.

Will. What, our Doll do you mean?

Amaryllis. Yes, Will.

Will. Hang her! let her walk: Blackberry won't carry double.

Amaryllis. I am sure he will, if you try him.

Will. Why should I hobble all the way with a fat wench behind me? She's able enough to walk.

Amaryllis. Don't be so ill-natured now: she would not be so to you if she could serve you.

Will. No, to be sure: as far as a kick o' the guts goes to cure one of the extericks, kindly christian! she will be ready enough with her service.

Amaryllis. Come, come! don't be so crusty now. Here is money for you: Blackberry must carry double. (*Giving him money.*)

Will. Ay, to be sure, if I coax him well, I don't know but he may: for tho' he is but a brute he has as many odd humours about him as any reasonable creature.

Amaryllis. Do, my good fellow, and put a soft pillion under her, for the road is very rough.

Will. Nay, hang me if I do that! she an't so delicate, good sooth!—Let her be ready to set off in ten minutes, if she means to come, for I won't wait an instant for the first madam in England. A soft pillion for her truly!

(*Grumbling as he goes into the stable.*)

Amaryllis. (*alone.*) He has been my rival, I see, by his spite. But no wonder! my charming girl must have many admirers.

[EXIT.

ACT V.

SCENE I.—THE KITCHEN. LANDLADY DISCOVERED GOING UP AND DOWN, BUSY WITH HER FAMILY AFFAIRS, AND DAVID WITH TWO COUNTRYMEN, DRINKING A POT OF BEER TOGETHER.

First man. (*drinking.*) My sarvice to you, David.

David. (*drinking.*) And here's to your very good health, Master Simons. But as I was a saying, if I were 'Squire Haretop, d'ye see, I would look after mine own affairs, and not let myself be eaten up by a parcel of greedy spendthrifts and wandering newsmongers. I would look after mine own affairs, d'ye see, that is what I would.

Second man. To be sure, David, it would be all the better for him, if so be that he were in the humour to think so.

David. Ay, to be sure it would, Master Gubbins. For this now is what I have always said, and advised, and commented, and expounded to every body, that a man who don't look after his own affairs, is, at the best, but a silly colt that strews about his own fodder.

Landlady. Lord help ye, David! would any one think to hear you talk, now, that you had been once the master of this inn, and all by neglecting of your own concerns are come to be the servant at last.

David. (*with great contempt.*) Does the silly woman think, because I did not mind every gill of gin, and pint of twopenny sold in the house, that I could not have managed my own concerns in a higher line? If my parents had done by me as they ought to have done, Master Simons, and had let me follow out my learning, as I was inclined to do, there is no knowing what I might have been.—Ods life! I might have been a clerk to the king, or mayhap an archbishop by this time. (*A knocking at the door.* Landlady *opens it, and enter two Farmers.*)

First Farmer. Is Dolly within?

Landlady. No, she is gone a little way a-field this morning, about some errands of her own.

Second Farmer. That is a pity now, for we bring her such rare news.

Landlady. Lack-a-daisy! what can that be?

Second Farmer. Her uncle, the grazier, is dead at last; and tho' he would never allow her a penny in his lifetime, as you well know, he has died without a will, and every thing that he has, comes to Dolly.

First Farmer. Ay, by my faith! as good ten thousand pounds, when house and stock, and all is disposed of, as any body would wish to have the handling of.

Landlady. Ten thousand pounds! how some people are born to be lucky! A poor woman like me may labour all her life long, and never make the twentieth part of it. *Enter Sally,* Come hither, Sally: did Doll tell you where she was going this morning?

Sally. No, but I can guess well enough, for she is all dress'd in white, and I know it is to Middleton church to be married to that there gentleman that writes all the songs and the metre.

Landlady. 'Tis lucky it's no worse. Step into the parlour, sirs, and I'll come to you

presently. (EXEUNT Farmers *and* Sally *different ways.*) What luck some people have! married to a gentleman too! fortune makes a lady of her at once.

David. By my faith! and fortune has been in great want of stuff for that purpose when she could light upon nothing better than Doll. They lack'd of fish to make a dish that filled their pan with tadpoles.

Landlady. Don't be so spiteful, now, David; some folks must be low in this world, and others must be high.

David. Yes, truly, she'll be high enough. Give some folks an inch and they'll take an ell; let fortune make her a lady, and she'll reckon herself a countess, I warrant ye.—Lord help us! I think I see her now, in all her stuff silks, and her great bobbing topknots, holding up her head as grand and as grave as a cat looking out of a window.—Foh! it were enough to make a body sick.

Landlady. Fy, David! you are as spiteful now as if somebody were taking something out of your pocket: I'll assure you she has a more genteeler behaviour than most young women in the parish: I have given her some lessons myself.

David. Ay, by my faith! and her gentility smacks devilishly of the place that she got it from.

Re-enter SALLY in great haste.

Sally. Lack-a-daisy! I went to the stable just now to tell Will about Dolly's great fortune; and he is gone, and Blackberry is gone, and the chaise and horses are gone.

Landlady. There is witchcraft about this house!—I'll pawn my life some of the gentlefolks are missing too; let us go and see.

[EXEUNT.

SCENE II.—ENTER LADY GOODBODY, MISS MARTIN, AND SIR JOHN HAZELWOOD.

Sir John H. (*speaking as he enters.*) I am heartily sorry for it: my nephew alone is to blame, and he will be severely punished for his fault.—You expect them to return when the ceremony is over: we shall see them soon then.

Lady G. I dare say we shall: and in the mean time let us drop this disagreeable subject.

Sir John H. Forgive me, Lady Goodbody, for appearing to regret so much the honour of connecting my family with yours.

Lady G. Indeed, Sir John, I could have wished to have received that honour from another party. Your nephew, however, sets you a good example in marrying, tho' I'm afraid it will be lost upon you.

Miss Martin. (*fretfully.*) Your Ladyship has teased Sir John so often upon this subject, that, if he has any spirit at all, he will certainly remain a bachelor from mere contradiction.

Sir John H. Yes, Miss Martin, that is a motive urged with authority by those who recommend it from experience. Nay, so greatly, it is said, do young ladies delight in it, that every thing they do ought to be explained by the rule of opposition. When they frown upon us it is a smile of invitation; when they avoid us it is a signal to stand upon the watch for a tete-a-tete; (*approaching her with an arch smile as she draws herself up with an affected indifference.*) but when they toss back their heads at our approach, in all the studied carelessness of contempt, we may consider ourselves as at the very pinnacle of favor. Is it allowable, madam, to take this rule for my guide?

Miss Martin. By all means, Sir John; self-love will naturally teach you to judge by that rule which proves most for your own advantage. I hope, however, you will allow those unlucky men upon whom we bestow our smiles, to find out another for themselves.

Lady G. (*to* Miss Martin, *displeased.*). You have got a sharp disagreeable way of talking of late, which is not at all becoming, child: you used to smile and look good-humoured to every body.

Miss Martin. And so I may again, madam, when I am with the poor silly folks who don't know how humiliating it is for them to be so treated: I hope I shall always be civil enough to spare Sir John Hazelwood that mortification. (*Making him an affected and ironical curtesy.*)

Lady G. (*peevishly.*) Let us have no more of this!—Sir John, I shall now give up teazing you about matrimony. I see you are incorrigible.

Sir John H. Then you see further than I do, madam, for I rather think it possible I may be persuaded to enter into it at last.

Lady G. I'm sure I most earnestly wish it for your own sake; and so confident am I of your making an excellent husband, that I would even venture to recommend you to the dearest relation I have.

Miss Martin. (*aside, breaking away from them suddenly, and hurrying to the other end of the room.*) At it again! I can bear this no longer.

Sir John H. (*to* Lady Goodbody.) You see, madam, this conversation is interesting only to you and me: had I not then better make love to your ladyship?

Lady G. Why there was a time, Sir John, when I was not without admirers.

Sir John H. How much I should have liked—but it would have been a dangerous gratification—to have seen these attractions in their full strength which are still so powerful in their decline.

Lady G. There is still a good likeness of me, as I was in those days, which Mary now wears upon her arm: whilst I go to give some orders to my woman, make her pull off her glove and shew it to you. You'll have the sight of a very pretty hand and arm by

the bye; our family is remarkable for pretty hands. [EXIT.

Sir John H. (*going up to* Miss Martin.) May I presume, madam, thus authorized, to beg you will have the condescension to gratify me.

Miss Martin. I can't possibly: It is not on my arm at present.

Sir John H. Nay, but I see the mark of it through your glove: may I presume to assist you in pulling it off? (*Offering to take hold of her glove, whilst she puts away his hand with great displeasure.*)

Miss Martin. You presume indeed: I can't suffer it to be pulled off.

Sir John H. Then I must indeed be presumptuous, for positively I will see it. (*Taking hold of her hand, whilst she, struggling to pull it away from him without effect, at last, in her distress, gives him with the other hand a good box on the ear, and then, bursting into tears, throws herself into the next chair, and covers her face with both her hands.*) My dear Miss Martin, forgive me! I fear I have behaved ungenerously to you: but believe me, careless as I may have appeared, I have beheld you with the most passionate admiration. (*Kneeling at her feet.*)

Miss Martin. (*turning from him disdainfully.*) Get up, Sir John, and find out some amusement more becoming your understanding and your years. (*Walks to the bottom of the stage with assumed dignity, whilst* Sir John *sits down much agitated on a chair on the front: she, turning round, perceives his agitation, and forgetting her displeasure, runs up to him eagerly.*)

Miss Martin. Good heaven! is it possible that you are thus affected. What is it that disturbs you so much?

Sir John H A very foolish distress, madam, but it will not long disturb me.

Miss Martin. I hope it will not.

Sir John H. Nay, it shall not, madam.— First when I beheld you, I was weak enough to think that I discovered in an assemblage of features by no means (pardon me) particularly handsome, as many worthy and agreeable qualities as would have been unpardonable in the most ardent physiognomist. I saw thro' the weak designs of your aunt, and applauded your delicacy and spirit. I will confess, that passing by the door of your apartment the other night, as it stood open, I heard you mention me to your cousin in a way that completely ensnared me. I was foolish enough to believe I had at last found a woman in whose keeping I might entrust my happiness. But it was a weakness in me: I see my folly now; and this is the last time I shall be the sport of vain capricious woman.

Miss Martin. Is it possible!—Oh, we have both been deceived! I have been deceived by something very far different from vanity —my wounded pride still whispering to me that I was the object of your ridicule: and you have been deceived by a physiognomy that has indeed told you untruly when it ventured to promise any thing more from me than the ordinary good qualities and disposition of my sex.—We have both been deceived; but let us part good friends: and when I am at any time inclined to be out of humour with myself, the recollection that I have been, even for a few deceitful moments, the object of your partiality, will be soothing to me.

Sir John H. (*catching hold of her as she goes away.*) No, madam, we must not part. (*Looking stedfastly and seriously in her face.*) Can you, Miss Martin, for once lay aside the silly forms of womanship, and answer me a plain question upon which the happiness of my life depends? Does your heart indeed bear me that true regard which would make you become the willing partner of my way thro' life, tho' I promise not that it shall be a flowery path, for my temper and habits are particular.

Miss Martin. Indeed, Sir John, you address me in so strange a way, that I don't know what I ought to say.

Sir John H. Fye upon it! I expected a simple, I had almost said a manly answer, from you now. (*Pauses, expecting an answer from her, whilst she remains silent and embarrassed.*) No, I see it is impossible: the woman works within you still, and will not suffer you to be honest. Well, I'll try another method with you. (*Taking her hand and grasping it firmly.*) If you do not withdraw from me this precious hand, I shall suppose you return me the answer I desire, and retain it as my own for ever.

Miss Martin. Why, you have hurt it so much in that foolish struggle, that you have not left it power to withdraw itself.

Sir John H. Now, fye upon thee again! this is a silly and affected answer. But let it pass: I find notwithstanding all my particular notions upon these matters, I must e'en take thee as thou art with all thy faults. (*Kissing her hand devoutly.*)

Miss Martin. I think I hear Worshipton's voice.

Sir John H. Ah, my poor miserable bridegroom of a nephew! I must be angry with him now, and I know not at present how to be angry.

Enter WORSHIPTON and HANNAH.

Wor. My dear uncle, I crave your blessing.

Sir John H. I think, sir, it would become you better, in the first place, to crave my pardon.

Wor. The world makes great allowance, my good Sir, for young men of fashion in my situation; knowing us to be of a free, careless, and liberal disposition, it calls us not strictly to account in matters of elopement.

Sir John H. A liberal disposition! No, sir; more selfish than the miser who hides his

hoarded gold in the earth. I wish you had made what is really right, and not what the world thinks allowable, the rule of your conduct.

Wor. I shan't argue with you about conduct, Sir John; it is a devilish awkward word in a young fellow's mouth: but if you will do me the honour of visiting me in town next winter, I shall introduce you to such society and amusements as country gentlemen have not always the opportunity of knowing. You will, I doubt not, have more deference for the world when you are better acquainted with it.

Sir John H. You are infinitely obliging, my most liberal sir.—And so this is all the apology you mean to offer for deceiving a young girl, and making her the victim of your frivolous and fantastical wants?

Wor. No, no! I do mean to make an apology to the old lady.—Ha! ha! ha! tho' I can't help laughing when I think how I have cheated that wonderful piece of goodness and circumspection. I must coax her a little to bring round the old fellow, my father-in-law, for I must have a brace of thousands to begin with immediately.

Sir John H. Yes, you are perfectly right to make as much of him as you can. (Sir John *leans thoughtfully against the side scene, and* Worshipton *struts conceitedly up and down, whilst* Miss Martin *and* Hannah *come forward from the bottom of the stage, engaged in conversation.*)

Hannah. (*in a busy half-whisper.*) So you see, my dear Mary, you must just tell my aunt that he ran away with me, and I could not help it. For, O la! he is so in love with me you can't think! And do you know we were married by such a queer-looking man: he had fifteen holes in his cassock, for I counted them all over the time of the service. And do you know, when we came to the church door, Mr. Worshipton had never a ring to put upon my finger. And do you know he borrowed an old ugly silver one of a woman who sold ballads by the gate, and gave her half-a-guinea for it, tho' it is not worth a sixpence. But I'm just as good a married woman, you know, for all that, as if it had been gold. (*Holding up her finger with the ring upon it.*) An't I?

Miss Martin. I believe it will make no great difference.

Hannah. I thought so.—Now do speak to my aunt for me.

Miss Martin. I certainly will, my dear Hannah, tho' you have played so sly with us.

Hannah. But la! don't tell her about the half guinea for the ring, for that would make her angrier than all the rest of it.—O lud! here she comes: stand before me a little bit. (*Shrinking behind* Miss Martin's *back.*)

Enter Lady Goodbody.

Lady G. Well, Mr. Worshipton, what have you done with my niece?

Wor. There she is, madam. (Hannah *comes from behind backs, and makes* Lady Goodbody *an awkward frightened curtesy.*) We are both come to beg your forgiveness, and I hope she will not suffer in your ladyship's good opinion for the honour she has conferred upon your humble servant.

Lady G. He must be a very humble servant indeed who derives any honour from her.

Wor. We hoped from the message you were so obliging as to send us, that we should not find you very severe.

Lady G. I think, however, I may be allowed to express some displeasure at not being consulted in a matter so interesting to my family, without being considered as very severe.

Wor. (*aside to* Sir John.) I only wonder she is not more angry with me. (*Aloud to* Lady Goodbody.) I was afraid, madam, of finding you unfavourable to my wishes, and durst not risk my happiness. But I hope you have no doubt of the honour of my intentions.

Lady G. Certainly; I cannot doubt of their being very honourable, and very disinterested also.—I have known men mean enough and selfish enough to possess themselves by secret elopements of the fortunes of unwary girls, whilst they have had nothing to give in return but indifference or contempt. Nay, I have heard of men so base as to take advantage of the weakness of a poor girl's intellects to accomplish the ungenerous purpose. But it is impossible to ascribe any but disinterested motives to you, Mr. Worshipton, as Miss Clodpate has but a very small fortune.

Wor. (*starting.*) What do you mean, madam? the only child of your brother, Sir Rowland: you call'd her so yourself.

Lady G. I told you she was the only child of my brother by his wife Sophia Elmot; but disagreeable circumstances sometimes take place in the best families, which it goes against one's feelings to repeat; and there was no necessity for my telling you, in indifferent conversation, that he has married his own cook maid a year and a half ago, by whom he has two stout healthy boys. (Worshipton *stands like one petrified for some time, but perceiving a smile upon* Miss Martin's *face takes courage.*)

Wor. Come, come! this joke won't pass upon me: I'm not so easily played upon.

Sir John H. It is a joke I'm afraid that will not make you merry, Worshipton.

Wor. I'll believe nobody but Hannah herself, for she can't be in the plot, and she is too simple to deceive me. (*To* Hannah.) Pray, my good girl, how many brothers have you got?

Hannah. La! only two; and one of them is called Rowland after my father, you know, and one of them little Johnny.

Wor. O, hang little Johnny, and the whole fools of the race! I am ruined beyond redemption. (*Pacing up and down, and tossing about his arms in despair.*)

Hannah. (going up to him.) La! Mr. Worshipton, what is the matter?

Miss Martin. (pulling her back.) Don't speak to him now.

Lady G. (going up to him soothingly.) Don't be so much overcome, Mr. Worshipton; things are not so very desperate. Hannah will have five thousand pounds at her father's death: he allows her the interest of it in the mean time, and I shall add two hundred a year to it. This, joined to your pay, may, I think, with prudence and economy, enable you to live together in a very snug comfortable way.

Wor. Damn your snug comfortable ways of living! my soul abhors the idea of it. I'll pack up all I have in a knapsack first, and join the wild Indians in America.—I wish I had been in the bottomless ocean ere I had come to this accursed place.

Sir John H. Have a little patience, Worshipton, and hear my plan for you. I'll pay your debts; you shall have the same income you had before, with more prudence perhaps to manage it well; and your wife shall live with her friends in the country.

Hannah. No, but I'll live with mine own husband, for he knows well enough he is mine own husband. (*Taking hold of* Worshipton, *whilst he shakes her off in disgust.)*

Lady G. How can you use your wife so, Mr. Worshipton!

Hannah. (whimpering.) Oh! he don't love me! Oh dear me! he don't love me a bit!

Wor. What is the creature whimpering for? I shall run distracted!

Sir John H. For God's sake be more calm! If you'll promise to live prudently in town, we shall manage your lady in the country for you. But remember, Edward, the first time I hear of your old habits returning upon you, she shall be sent to London to pay you a visit.

Wor. O dog that I am! and so this is all that I have made of my plots and my——— Idiot and fool that I am!

Sir John H. Consider of it, Worshipton, and consider of it well.

Wor. I am distracted, and can consider of nothing.

Enter AMARYLLIS, followed by DOLLY and LANDLADY.

Amaryllis. I am come to pay my compliments to you, Worshipton, with all possible good will; I wish you and your fair bride joy, most cordially.

Wor. Nay, I wish you joy, Amaryllis.

Amaryllis. Ha! who has been so officious as to tell you of my marriage already?

Wor. Married!—No, faith; I gave you joy because I thought you a bachelor still. Married! what a dog you have made of yourself! —But no; your refined, your angelic Delia has favoured your wishes at last, and with such a woman, you may indeed be a married man without being miserable.

Landlady. (to Worshipton.) What did you say about Delia, sir? he is married to our Doll.

Amaryllis (fretfully to Landlady.) Who desired you to follow me here, ma'am?

Landlady. It was your own wedded wife, sir, that desired me to come; and since you have chosen to marry the maid, I see no reason you have for to turn up your nose at the mistress. And you need not go for to be ashamed of her neither: she is as clever a girl as ever whirled a mop, and as honest a girl too; and that is more than can be said for many a one that carries her head higher.

Wor. (bursting into a laugh.) Heaven and earth, Amaryllis! are you married to Mrs. Dolly?

Amaryllis. Dorothea is a very good girl, Mr. Worshipton.

Wor. Yes, yes! I see 'tis even so. Ha! ha! ha! *(laughing violently for a long time, till he is obliged to hold both his sides.)* This is excellent! this is admirable! I thank thee, Amaryllis! thou hast been playing the fool as well as myself. Give me thy hand, man.— Ha! ha! ha!

Sir John H. (stepping forward, after having whispered some time behind backs with the Landlady.) No, good nephew, moderate your laughter a little: Amaryllis has been playing the fool in a very different way from you; for he has married his bride without expecting one farthing with her, and learns on returning from church, as our good landlady has been informing me, that an uncle of hers is just dead, who has left her a very handsome fortune. (Worshipton, *whose mirth stops in a moment, endeavours to resume the laugh again, but finding it wont do, retires in confusion to the bottom of the stage.)*

Sir John H. (to Amaryllis *and* Dolly.) Much happiness may you both have in your good fortune! With the woman of your choice, and a competency, Amaryllis, you will be in the most favourable state of all others for courting the muses.

Amaryllis. Yes, Sir John; with my own slender patrimony, and the fortune my wife brings to me, I hope to make my little cot no unfavoured haunt of the fair sisters I am not the first poet who has been caught by the artless charms of a village maid; and my wife will have as much beauty in my eyes, dress'd in her russet gown, as the———

Dolly. But I won't wear a russet gown tho': I have money of my own, and I'll buy me silk ones.

Sir John H. Well said, Mrs. Amaryllis! Gentle poet, your village maid is a woman of spirit.

Amaryllis. She is untaught, to be sure, and will sometimes speak unwittingly.

Sir John H. Never mind that, my good sir; we shall have her taught. You shall make my house your home till your cot is ready for you, where I soon hope to have a lady who will take some pains to form your charming Dorothea for her present situation.

Lady G. So you are to have a lady, then? If you had told me so before, I might have

spared all my arguments upon this subject.

Sir John H. Indeed, madam, you might have spared them, tho' they were very good ones, I confess: the sight of this lady, (*taking Miss Martin's hand.*) made every other argument unnecessary. I hope you will give me your blessing with her. I want but this, and will not inquire of you how many brothers she has.

Lady G. So my Mary has caught you after all. Thank God for it! She is good enough for any man, and I would rather give her to you than to any other man in the world. As for her brothers, she has but one, and he has increased, instead of diminishing her fortune.

Sir John H. Talk no more of these things; I hate the very name of fortune at present.

Lady G. Pardon me; but I must tell you what my nephew Robert did: it may be good for another new-made nephew of mine to listen to it. (*Glancing a look to Worshipton.*) He and his sister were left orphans without any provision: I bought him a commission in the army; and with the addition of fifty pounds which I sent him every year on his birth-day, as a godmother's gift, he contrived to live respectably without debt, and was esteemed by his brother officers.

Sir John H. I know it well: a friend of mine had the pleasure of knowing him abroad; where he served with distinction and honour.

Lady G. Yes, he was afterwards ordered abroad with his regiment, where he had it in his power to acquire a little money with integrity; the best part of which, (three thousand pounds,) he sent home to his sister immediately, that she might no longer be dependent even upon me; and it shall be paid down to you, Sir John, upon her wedding-day.

Sir John H. No; God forbid that a country gentleman should add to his ample income the well-earn'd pittance of a soldier! I will have nothing from the young hero but the honour of being allied to him; and what advantage may accrue, by the bye, to my family, by setting so fair an example to such members of it, as may not have walked altogether in his footsteps.

Wor. Well, well, I understand you; but tell me no more of your good-boy stories at present: this cross-fated day has taught me a powerful lesson which makes every other superfluous. [EXEUNT.

CONSTANTINE PALEOLOGUS: A TRAGEDY.

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

MEN:

Constantine Paleologus, *Emperor of the Greeks.*
Mahomet, *the Turkish Sultan.*
Othus, *a learned Greek.*
Rodrico, *a Genoese naval commander.*
Justiniani, *a noble Genoese, and a soldier.— Friends of* Constantine, *and belonging to his brave band of volunteers.*
Petronius, } *Greeks, and secret agents*
Marthon, } *of* Mahomet.
Osmir, *vizer to* Mahomet.
Heugho, *an old domestic officer of* Constantine's.
Othoric, *a rude, but generous adventurer.*
Fortune-teller, Citizens, Attendants, &c.

WOMEN:

Valeria, *wife of* Constantine.
Ella, *daughter of* Petronius.
Lucia, *a lady attendant on* Valeria.
Ladies and Attendants.

Scene *in* Constantinople, *and in the camp of* Mahomet, *near the City.*

ACT I.

Scene I.—A large platform on the roof of the palace of Petronius, from which are seen spires and towers, and the broken roofs of houses, &c. with the general appearance of a ruined city, the distant parts involved in smoke. Ella is discoverd with an attendant, standing on a balcony belonging to a small tower, rising from the side of the platform. As the curtain draws up the sound of artillery is heard.

Enter Othus and Marthon.

Othus. Ah, see how sadly chang'd the prospect is,
Since first from our high station we beheld
This dismal siege begin! 'Midst level ruin,
Our city now shews but its batter'd towers,
Like the jagg'd bones of some huge animal,
Whose other parts the mould'ring hand of time
Has into dust reduc'd.
Mar. (*coldly.*) It does indeed some faint resemblance hold
To what thou hast compared it to.—How is't?
Art thou not from the walls?
Othus. No, not immediately.
Mar. Wert thou not there when Mahomet's huge cannon
Open'd its brazen mouth and spoke to us?
How brook'd thine ears that deep tremendous sound?
The coasts of Asia and th' Olympian heights,
Our land begirded seas, and distant isles,
Spoke back to him again, in his own voice,
A deep and surly answer; but our city,
This last imperial seat of Roman greatness:
This head of the world, this superb successor
Of the earth's mistress, where so many Cæsars
In proud successive lines have held their sway,
What answer sent she back?
Othus. Fye, hold thy tongue!
Methinks thou hast a pleasure in the thought.
This head o' the world—this superb successor
Of the earth's mistress, as thou vainly speak'st,
Stands midst these ages as in the wide ocean
The last spar'd fragment of a spacious land,
That in some grand and awful ministration
Of mighty nature has ingulphed been,
Doth lift aloft its dark and rocky cliffs
O'er the wild waste around, and sadly frowns
In lonely majesty. But shame upon it!
Her feeble, worthless, and degen'rate sons—
Mar. Yes, what say'st thou of them? they also are
The fragments of a brave and mighty race,
Left on this lonely rock.
Othus. No, blast them! on its frowning sides they cluster
Like silly sea-fowl from their burrow'd holes,
Who, staring senseless on th' invader's toil,
Stretch out their worthless necks, and cry "caw! caw!"
O, Paleologus! how art thou left,
Thou and thy little band of valiant friends,
To set your manly bosoms 'gainst the tide!
Ye are the last sparks of a wasted pyre
Which soon shall be trode out.—
Ye! are the last green bough of an old oak,
Blasted and bare: the lovelier do ye seem
For its wan barrenness; but to its root
The axe is brought, and with it ye must fall.—
Ye are —— O God! it grasps my swelling throat
To think of what ye are.
Mar. A brave band, truly:——
But still our gallant emp'ror and his friends,
Oppos'd to Mah'met and his numerous host
With all his warlike engines, are in truth
As if one toss'd against the whirl'd-up sands
Of their Arabian plains, one grasp of dust.

Othus. Yes, they are few in number, but they are
The essence and true spirit of their kind;
The soul of thousands. A brave band they are,
Not levied by the power and wealth of states;
And the best feelings of the human heart
Have been the agents of their princely chief,
Recruiting nobly. Virtuous Sympathy,
Who on the weaker and deserted side,
His ample, lib'ral front doth ever range;
Keen indignation, who, with clenched hand
And sternly-flashing eye, ever beholds
The high o'erbearing crest of proud oppression;
And gen'rous Admiration, above all,
Of noble deeds, whose heav'n-enlighten'd smile,
And imitative motion, ever wake
With eager heart-throbs at the glorious sight
Of manly daring, have unto their numbers
Some score of dauntless spirits lately added;
Such as would ride upon the whirlwind's back,
If it might be, and with Heaven's spearmen cope.
With such a band, methinks, all things are possible.

Mar. (*smiling.*) Why, thou soft man of peace,
Who in gay banquets spend'st thy giddy nights,
And o'er some sculptur'd stone, or ancient lore,
Each idle morning wast'st in the cool shade,
Thou speakest with a bold and warlike voice!

Othus. (*throwing back his cloak, and showing under it a warlike garb, with the scarf and devises belonging to the imperial band.*)
Ay, and wear'st too a bold and warlike form.
Behold what now I am! thou shrinkest back,
And lookest strangely on me: give thy lips
No friendly blessing to my new estate?

Mar. Heaven bless the brave!

Othus. Amen! but thou art cold. (*Sound of artillery is heard again.*)
O hear that sound!
Doth it not stir thee as it thund'ring growls
Along the distant shore? (*Shaking his head.*)
It moves thee not.
Is that the sound of female voices near us?

Mar. Yes; see'st thou not on yon high balcony
That pale and fearful maid? her watchful ear
Is ever turn'd to ev'ry distant sound.

Othus. My gentle kinswoman upon the watch!
I know for whom she fears; nor do I marvel;
For she was present on that crowded shore,
When Genoa's captain brought his gen'rous succour,
And saw the brave contention of those men,
In their proud vessels bearing boldly on,
With wavy penants floating on the wind,
Whose armed sides, like a goodly bank,
Breasted the onward tide of opposition.
(*Speaking with a great deal of appropriate gesture.*)
No wonder that her fancy has been mov'd!
Oh, it did stir the women on our walls—
The infants—yea, the very household curs,
That from their kennels turn'd to look upon it!—
But for that motley crowd of moving things
Which we miscall our men —— Nay, by the light,
Thou too dost hear me with a frozen eye!

Enter ELLA hastily from the balcony, and puts her hand eagerly upon the shoulder of OTHUS, who turns round surprised.

Ella. What say'st thou of him? where fights he now?
Or on the land, or on some floating fence?

Othus. Of whom speak'st thou, fair Ella?

Ella. Nay, nay! thou know'st right well. Did I not see thee,
High as I stood, e'en now, tossing thine arms,
And motioning thy tale with such fit gesture
As image ships and sails, and daring deeds?
Of whom speak even the beggars in our streets
When they such action use? Thou know'st right well,
Of Genoa's captain, and of none but he.
Did'st see him from the walls?

Othus. (*smiling.*) My little kinswoman,
Thou lookest with a keen and martial eye
As thou dost question me: I saw him not;
I come not from the walls.

Ella. Didst thou not talk of him as I descended?

Othus. Yes, of that noble fight.—But dost thou see (*pointing to his dress.*)
There are more warriors in the world, Ella,
Tho' men do talk of us, it must be granted,
With action more compos'd. Behold me now
The brave Rodrigo's comrade, and the friend
Of royal Constantine; who is in truth
The noblest beast o' the herd, and on the foe
Turns a bold front, whilst with him boldly turn
A few brave antlers from a timid crowd,
That quakes and cow'rs behind.

Ella. Yes, Othus, I did mark thy martial garb:
Heaven's angels bless thee!

Othus. And earth's too, gentle Ella. (*Artillery heard again.*)

Ella. (*to* Othus, *starting fearfully.*) O dost thou smile and such light words affect
Whilst ruin growls so near us! hath sad use
Made misery and sport, and death and merriment,
Familiar neighbours?—I'll into my chamber.

Enter PETRONIUS and a disguised TURK.

Pet. (*sternly to* Ella.) Yes, to thy chamber go: thou liv'st methinks,

On the house-top, or watching in the towers.
I like it not; and maiden privacy
Becomes thy state and years. (*To* Othus.) Ha! art thou Othus?
Thou'rt well accoutred, sooth! I knew thee not.

Mar. Yes, he is now a valiant soldier grown:
His Grecian lute, and pen, and books of grace
Are thrown aside, and the soft letter'd sage
Grasps a rude lance.

Ella. Nay, mock him not, for it is nobly done.

Pet. (*sternly to* Ella.) Art thou still here?
[Exit Ella *abashed and chidden.*
And now, my Lord,——(*Turning to* Othus.)

Othus. (*angrily.*) And now, my Lord, good evening:
I too, belike, shall trespass on your patience,
If longer I remain. [Exit.

Pet. Well, let him go, it suits our purpose better.
But who could e'er have thought in warlike garb
To see him guis'd? He, too, become a fool!

Mar. He thought, as well I guess, to move me also,
His brave devoted brotherhood to join:
This was his errand here.

Pet. I do believe it well: for Constantine,
With many fair and princely qualities
That in his clear morn no attention drew,
Now, on the brow of dark adversity,
Hangs like a rainbow on a surly cloud,
And all men look to him. But what avails
This growing sentiment of admiration
To our good means? Good Turk, where is thy gold?

Turk. (*giving him a bag.*) There, Christian, whom I may not well call good.

Pet. That as thou wilt: but Mahomet thy master
Shall find me still his faithful agent here.
This very night, as I have promis'd to him,
The people shall in insurrection rise,
Clam'ring to have the city yielded up;
And if your narrow caution stint me not
In that which rules the storm, it shall be rais'd
To the full pitch.

Turk. And what is that, Petronius?

Pet. More gold. Ay, by thy turban and thy beard!
There is a way to make our timid sluggards
The Sultan's work within these walls perform.
Better than armed men.

Turk. And what is that, I pray?

Pet. Why, more gold still.——
I have in pay, besides our mutinous rabble,
Who bawl, and prate, and murmur in our streets,
Prophets, and conjurers, and vision seers,
And wise men not a few, whose secret haunts
The timid flock too: many are the palms
That must be touch'd.—There are within our walls
Of idle, slothful citizens, enow,
If with their active master they should join,
Still to defend them: therefore, be assur'd,
He who shall keep this fickle, wav'ring herd
From such wise union, shall to Mah'met give
This Mistress of the East.

Turk. Fear not; thou shalt be satisfied.

Pet. Right: let us now to work: 'tis near the time
When, from the walls returning with his friends,
The Emperor his ev'ning hour enjoys,
And puts off warlike cares: now let us forth,
And urge those varlets on. (*To* Marthon.)
Do thou into the eastern quarter go,
And stir them up. Where is our trusty Gorbus?
The western is his province. Send him hither:
We must some counsel hold: meantime within
I wait his coming. Be thou speedy, Marthon. [Exit Marthon.
Remember, friend. (*To the* Turk.)

Turk. Thou shalt be satisfied.

Pet. Good fortune smile upon us!
[Exeunt.

Scene II.—A state apartment in the imperial palace, with splendid sideboards set forth, on which are seen cups and goblets, &c., as if prepared for a grand repast, and several domestics crossing the stage, carrying different things in their hands.

Enter Heugho, followed by a Stranger and two inferior domestic Officers.

Heu. (*after looking over every thing.*) Is nought omitted here? the rubied platters,
And the imperial cup—I see them not.

First Officer. What boots it now, encompass'd thus with foes
And death and ruin grinning at our side,
To set forth all this sumptuous garniture,
Which soon shall in a Turkish haram shine?
The Emp'ror heeds it not.

Heu. (*stamping with his foot.*) Dog, but I heed it!
And were the floating remnant of a wreck,
With the sea bellowing round it, all that now
Remain'd of the eastern empire, I thereon,
Until the last wave wash'd us from its side,
Would humbly offer to brave Constantine
The homage due to mine imperial lord.
Out on thee, paltry hind! go fetch them hither. [Exit Officer

Stran. This is the hour, you say, when Constantine,

Like a tir'd woodman from his daily toil,
Unclasps his girded breast; and with his friends
Enjoys his social meal right cheerfully
For one so overshadow'd with dark fate.
I am a stranger here, and, by your leave,
I fain would tarry still to have one view
Of his most noble countenance.

Heu. Thou'rt welcome.
And, gentle stranger, thou wilt see a prince,
Who ably might have reign'd, had not his heart
To the soft shades of friendly intercourse
Still turn'd, as to its true and native place.
A prince with loving friends, but lacking troops:
Rich in the dear good-will of gen'rous minds,
But poor in kingly allies. One thou'lt see,
Whose manly faculties, beset with gifts
Of gentler grace, and soft domestic habits,
And kindliest feelings, have within him grown
Like a young forest-tree, beset and 'tangled,
And almost hid with sweet incumb'ring shrubs;
That, till the rude blast rends this clust'ring robe,
Its goodly hardy stem to the fair light
Discovers not. Hark! now they come:
(Flourish of trumpets.)
Stand thou secure, and see whate'er thou wilt.
(*Calling to some people off the stage.*)
Ho! you without! move there with more dispatch.

(*Several domestics again cross the stage as before.*)

Stran. See, yonder come the brave imperial friends,
If right I guess. They bear a noble mien.
And who is he who foremost walks with steps
Of gravely measur'd length, and heavy eyes
Fix'd on the ground?
(*Pointing off the stage.*)

Heu. That is Justiniani; a brave soldier,
Who doth o' tiptoe walk, with jealous care,
Upon the very point and highest ridge
Of honour's path, demure and circumspect,
Like nicest maid, proud of her spotless fame;
A steady, cheerless friend.

Stran. And who is he with open, lib'ral front,
Who follows next?

Heu. He is the brave Rodrigo;
That Genoese, who, with four gallant ships,
Did in the front of the whole Turkish fleet
So lately force his passage to our port,
Bearing us gen'rous and most needful succour.
Does he not look like one, who in the fight
Would fiercely strive, yet to the humbled foe
Give quarter pleasantly?

Stran. And who comes after with more polish'd aspect,
But yet, methinks, keen and intelligent?

Heu. Oh, that is Othus; a soft letter'd sage,
Who wears his soldier's garb with its first gloss.

Stran. Constantine comes not yet?

Heu. No; first of all to his imperial dame,
Who o'er his mind a greater influence has
Than may, perhaps, with graver wisdom suit,
Being a dame of keen and lofty passions
Tho' with fair virtues grac'd, he ever pays
His dear devotions; he will join them shortly.
But softly; here they are.

Enter Justiniani, Rodrigo, Othus, and many others of the Emperor's friends, armed as if returned from the walls.

Rod. (*to* Justiniani.) Thou'rt sternly grave; has aught in this day's fight
Befall'n, thy eager temper to disturb?

Jus. Your first directed fire should, in good right,
Have been against that Turkish standard sent,
Rear'd in their front.

Rod. And shall we seriously expend our strength
In paying worship to each Turkish rag
That waves before our walls?
But frown not on me, friend: perhaps I'm wrong.
We who are bred upon a bark's rough side,
And midst the rude contention of the waves,
Must force our steady purpose, as we may,
Right in the teeth of all opposing things,
Wrestling with breakers on the scourged rock,
Or tilting it with a seal's cub, good faith!
As it may chance, nought do we know of forms.

Othus. Another time, valiant Justiniani,
With more respect to warlike ceremony
We will conduct ourselves.
Rodrigo well hath pled his own excuse;
And I, thou knowest, am but new in arms.

Jus. Methinks ev'n to a child it had been plain
That, when so circumstanced——

Othus. Hush, hush, I pray thee, now! the emp'ror comes:
This is his hour of cheerful relaxation,
Snatch'd from each circling day of busy cares,
A faint gleam thrown across a dismal gloom,
Let us not dark it with our petty brawls.

Enter Constantine.

Constan. (*saluting them.*) A pleasant meeting to us all, brave friends,
After our day of toil! There be amongst us
Tir'd limbs that well have earn'd their hour of rest;
This kindly-social hour, this fleeting bliss
Of the tir'd labourer. Undo our bracings,
And let us sup as lightly as we may. (*Taking off his helmet, which he gives to an attendant.*)
This galls me strangely:
Mine armourer, methinks, has better skill

To mar men's heads than save them.
Nay all of you, I pray. (*They all begin to take off their helmets, and part of their armour.*)
And gentle Othus too, unbrace thyself:
How likest thou the gripe of soldiers' geer?

Othus. Worn in the cause for which I wear it now,
It feels like the close hug of a rough friend,
Awkward but kindly.

Constan. Thanks, gen'rous Othus! it had pleased me better
To've had the gentle service of thy pen.
Thou could'st have told, if so it might have been,
How brave men acted, and how brave men fell.—
Well, let it be. (*Turning aside to check his emotion, and then assuming a cheerful face.*)
You gallant seamen, in th' applauding view
Of the throng'd beach, amidst the tempest's rage,
Ev'n on the last plank of your sever'd bark,
Ride it careeringly, my brave Rodrigo!

Rod. Yes, royal sir; with brave true-hearted mates
All things we do and bear right cheerfully.

Constan. And so will we.—Your hand, my gallant friend!
And yours, and yours, and yours, my brave Eubedes—
And noble Carlos too—and all of you—
(*Taking all their hands, one after another.*)
I am indeed so mated.
Bring me a cooling cup, I pray, good Heugho,
My tongue is parched. (Heugho *presents a cup to him kneeling.*)
What, wilt thou still upon thine aged limbs
These cumb'rous forms impose? These surly times
Suit not such ceremony, worthy Heugho.

Heu. Be health and sweet refreshment in the draught,
My royal master!

Constan. (*tasting it.*) And so there is: few cups presented thus
Come with such kindness. But I have, in truth,
Shrunk, as a potentate, to such small grasp,
That now I fairly may put in my claim
To the affections of a man.—Brave friends,
Health to ye all! (*Drinks, then turning with a smile to* Justiniani.)
Justiniani, I with thee alone
Have cause of quarrel in this day's long toil.

Jus. How so, an' please your highness?
The holy hermit, counting o'er his beads,
Is not more scrupulous than I have been
Nought of his sacred duty to omit.

Constan. Thou put'st a gross affront upon the worth
Of all thy warlike deeds; for thou from them
Claim'st not the privilege to save thyself
From needless dangers. On the walls this day
Thou hast exposed thyself like a raw stripling,
Who is asham'd to turn one step aside
When the first darts are whizzing past his ear.
Rodrigo there, beneath an ass's pannier
Would save his head from the o'er passing blow,
Then, like a lion issuing from his den,
Burst from his shelter with redoubled ardour.
Pray thee put greater honour on thyself,
And I will thank thee for it.

Jus. I stand reproved.

Constan. I'm glad thou dost.—Now to our social rites!
No tir'd banditti in their nightly cave,
Whose goblets sparkle to the ruddy gleam
Of blazing faggots, eat their jolly meal
With toils, and dangers, and uncertainty
Of what to-morrow brings, more keenly season'd
Than we do ours.—Spare not, I pray thee, Heugho,
Thy gen'rous Tuscan cup: I have good friends
Who prize its flavour much. (*As he turns to go with his friends to the bottom of the stage, where a curtain between the pillars being drawn up, discovers their repast set out, a* Citizen *enters in haste.*)

Citizen. I crave to speak unto the emperor.

Constan. What is thine errand?

Citizen. My royal sir, the city's in commotion:
From ev'ry street and alley, ragged varlets
In crowds pour forth, and threaten mighty things.
But one, whom I out-ran, comes on my steps
To bring a fuller tale.

Constan. (*to* Citizen.) Thou'rt sure of this?

Citizen. It is most certain.

Constan. (*to* Othus.) What think'st thou, good Othus?

Othus. I doubt it not: 'tis a degraded herd
That fills your walls. This proud imperial city
Has been in ages past the great high-way
Of nations driving their blind millions on
To death and carnage. Thro' her gates have past
Pale cowled monarchs and red-sworded saints,
Voluptuaries foul, and hard-eyed followers
Of sordid gain—yea, all detested things.
She hath a common lake or fludge-pool been,
In which each passing tide has left behind
Some noisome sediment. She is choak'd up
With mud and garbage to the very brim.
Her citizens within her would full quietly
A pagan's slaves become, would he but promise them
The sure continuance of their slothful ease.
Some few restraints upon their wonted habits
And Mah'met's gold, no doubt, have rous'd the fools
To this unwonted stir.

Constan. It may be so: I shall wait further tidings.
Mean time, my friends, go ye, and as ye can,
Snatch a short soldier's meal.
(*They hesitate.*)
Nay, go I pray you!
I must not to my friends say "I command."
(*They all go immediately, and without any order, standing round the table, begin to eat.*)
(*To the* Citizen, *remaining still on the front of the stage.*)
And so thou say'st———But lo! another messenger.

Enter another CITIZEN in great haste.

Second Citizen. The citizens in crowds—the men and women—
The very children too—mine eyes have seen it—
In crowds they come———
Constan. Take breath, and tell thy tale
Distinctly. From what quarter comest thou?
Second Citizen. I'm from the east.

Enter THIRD CITIZEN.

Third Citizen. I come to tell your highness that the city
Is in commotion; ev'n with flesh-forks arm'd,
And all the implements of glutt'nous sloth,
The people pour along in bawling crowds,
Calling out, "bread," and "Mah'met," and "surrender,"
Towards the royal palace.
Constan. And whence art thou?
Third Citizen. I'm from the western quarter.
Constan. Ha! spreads it then so wide? (*Calling to his friends at the bottom of the stage.*)
Friends, by your leave,
I somewhat must upon your goodness bear.
Give me my helmet and my sword again:
This is no partial fray. (*Beginning to arm, whilst all the rest follow his example.*)
Rod. Well, let us jostle with these ragged crafts,
And see who grapples best. (*Buckling on his armour gayly.*)
Jus. A soldier scorns to draw his honour'd blade
On such mean foes: we'll beat them off with sticks.
Othus. Words will, perhaps, our better weapons prove,
When us'd as brave men's arms should ever be,
With skill and boldness. Swords smite single foes,
But thousands by a word are struck at once.
(*As they all gather round* Constantine, *and are ready to follow him, enter* Valeria *in great alarm, followed by* Lucia, *and several ladies.*)
Val. (*to* Constantine.) O, hast thou heard it?
Constan. Yes, my love, they've told me.
Val. From the high tower my ladies have descry'd
The dark spires redd'ning in their torches' light,
Whilst, like the hoarse waves of a distant sea,
Their mingled voices swell as they approach.
Constan. It is a storm that soon will be o'erblown:
I will oppose to them a fixed rock,
Which they may beat against but cannot shake.
Val. That is thyself.—O, no! thou shalt not go!
Yea, I am bold! misfortune mocks at state,
And strong affection scorns all reverence;
Therefore, before these lords, ev'n upon thee,
Thou eastern Cæsar, do I boldly lay
My woman's hand, and say, "thou shalt not go."
Constan. Thy woman's hand is stronger, sweet Valeria,
Than warrior's iron grasp,
But yet it may not hold me. Strong affection
Makes thee most fearful where no danger is.
Shall eastern Cæsar, like a timid hind
Scar'd from his watch, conceal his cowering head?
And does an empire's dame require it of him?
Val. Away, away, with all those pompous sounds!
I know them not. I by thy side have shar'd
The public gaze, and the applauding shouts
Of bending crowds: but I have also shar'd
The hour of thy heart's sorrow, still and silent,
The hour of thy heart's joy. I have supported
Thine aching head, like the poor wand'rer's wife,
Who, on his seat of turf, beneath heaven's roof,
Rests on his way.—The storm beats fiercely on us:
Our nature suits not with these worldly times,
To it most adverse. Fortune loves us not;
She hath for us no good; do we retain
Her fetters only? No, thou shalt not go!
(*Twining her arms round him.*)
By that which binds the peasant and the prince,
The warrior and the slave, all that do bear
The form and nature of a man, I stay thee!
Thou shalt not go.
Constan. Would'st thou degrade me thus?
Val. Would'st thou unto my bosom give death's pang?
Thou lov'st me not.
Constan. (*with emotion, stretching out his hand to his friends who stand at some distance.*)
My friends, ye see how I am fetter'd here.
Ye who thus bravely to my fortunes cling
With generous love, less to redeem their fall
Than on my waning fate by noble deeds
To shed a parting ray of dignity:
Ye gen'rous and devoted; still with you
I thought to share all dangers: go ye now,
And to the current of this swelling tide
Set your brave breasts alone. (*Waving them off with his hand, and then turning to her.*)
Now, wife, where would'st thou lead me?

Val. (*pointing with great energy to the friends who are turning as if to go out.*)
There, there! O, there! thou hast no other way. (*Brushing away her tears hastily, and then assuming an air of dignity, she takes* Constantine *by the hand, and leading him across the stage, presents him to his friends.*)
Most valiant, honour'd men, receive your chief,
Worthy the graceful honours of your love,
And heaven's protecting angel go with you!
(Exeunt Constantine *and his friends, paying obeisance to her as they retire, which she returns with the profoundest respect, continuing to look after them till they are out of sight; then returning to the front of the stage with a deep sigh, remains for some time with her eyes fixed on the ground.*)
Lucia. My dear and royal mistress, be not thus!
The people will their sov'reign lord respect.
Val. Will they? Where is my little Georgian maid,
Whose grandsire, tho' a brave and sov'reign prince,
Was piece-meal torn by a ferocious crowd?
Lucia. She told a wonderful surcharged tale,
Perhaps to move your pity: heed it not.
Val. Ah! whereunto do all these turmoils tend—
The wild contention of these fearful times?
Each day comes bearing on its weight of ills,
With a to-morrow shadow'd at its back
More fearful than itself.——A dark progression—
And the dark end of all, what will it be?
Lucia. Let not such gloomy thoughts your mind o'ercast;
Our noble emperor has on his side
The dark and potent powers.
Val. What is thy meaning?
Lucia. A rarely-gifted man, come from afar,
Who sees strange visions rise before his sight
Of things to come, hath solemnly pronounc'd it
That Paleologus has on his side
The dark and potent powers.
Val. Alas! alas! are they the friends of virtue?
Who told thee this?
Lucia. One unto whom he told such mar-v'llous things
As did all nat'ral knowledge far exceed.
Val. Thou dost impress me with a strange desire,
As tho' it were upon my mind impress'd
By secret supernatural power. Methinks,
Were this dread night with all its dangers past,
I too would fain———Ha! hark! what noise is that? (*Listening with great alarm.*)
Hark, hark! it is the sound of many sounds,
Mingled and terrible, tho' heard afar.
Lucia. Shall I ascend the tower, and give you notice
Whate'ere I see?
Val. (*eagerly.*) I'll go myself. (*Exit in great alarm, followed by* Lucia *and ladies.*)

ACT II.

Scene I.—An open street before the imperial palace. A crowd of men, women, and children discovered, bearing in their hands torches, with clubs, sticks, &c. and the stage entirely lighted by the red glare of their torches cast up against the walls of the building. The confused noise and clamour of a great crowd is heard as the curtain draws up.

First Crowd. Holla! let them come forth who trouble us,
And love they blood and beating they shall have it.
Second Crowd. Surrender! bread and wine, and peaceful days!
Surrender, devils, or ye shall pay the cost.
(*All the Crowd call out clamorously, and brandish their torches, &c., in a threatening manner against the palace.*)
Third Crowd. Must we, men well instructed, rear'd, and cherish'd,
The chiefest of all townsmen of the earth;
We, whom all nations know and look upon
With envious worship—must we from our meals
And quiet couches, like your rude barbarians,
Be scar'd and rous'd with the continued bellowing
Of curst artillery? it is a shame!
First Crowd. It is a crying, an insulting shame.
Ev'n Mahomet regards our polish'd race
And rare acquirements; but for Constantine———
Second Crowd. Ay, ay! let him come forth with his base crew
Of savage strangers; and should they refuse us,
Ev'n with good teeth and nails, fail other means,
We will do vultures' work upon them all.
(*All of them calling out together, and brandishing their torches, &c., as before.*)
Holla! holla! we say to you again;
Emperor! Constantine! come forth to us!
(*A grand door of the palace opens, from which two flights of stairs descend into the street, and* Constantine *with his friends appear coming out upon the landing place. The Crowd raise a great noise upon seeing him, and he stretches out his hand as if he wished to speak, but they still continue loud and clamorous.*)
Constan. Audience, if that your sov'reign may command it.
Fourth Crowd. Yes, let us hear what he will say to us.
(*Several together.*) There is no harm in that: peace all of you!
Constan. Behold me at your wish, assembled citizens:

Was it the voice of children or of foes
That call'd me forth?
Third Crowd. Go to with mocking words! are we thy children?
Constan. Ye say, indeed, too truly! children do
Support, and honour, and obey their sire:
They put their aiding hand to every burden
That presses on him: ever gather round him
When dark misfortune lowers; and, strong in them,
He lifts his honour'd head amidst the storm,
Blessing and bless'd.
But I have stood in the dark pass alone,
Facing its fiercest onset. In your homes,
Ye've stretch'd your easy limbs and fann'd your brows,
Whilst I in parching toil have spent the day,
Aided by strangers. Ye too truly say
"Are we thy children?"——When my sky was clear,
Ye follow'd me with fond applauding love,
And bade God bless your sire; but when it lower'd,
Back to your homes ye shrunk, and gen'rous strangers
Are by my side where children should have stood. (*A confused murmur rises amongst them, and some call out.*)
He speaks good reason, neighbours.
(*Others call out.*) Out on it! all fair words!
(*Others.*) Peace, sirs! we'll hear him out.
(*Others.*) No! no! no! no! (*Brandishing their torches violently.*)
Oth. (*breaking through them with a great club in his hands.*)
Peace, friends, I say! I am a strong Hungarian,
And I will hear him out. (*The clamour subsides.*)
Constan. Yes, when the tempest lower'd ye shrunk away.
But if some gen'rous shame has mov'd you now—
If, thus assembled, with repentant zeal
Ye would return, behold these open'd arms!
O there be still amongst ye men sufficient
To save your city, your domestic roofs,
Your wives, your children, all that good men love;
Were each one willing for a little term
To face but half the dangers which perforce
Not doing this, he stands exposed to;
To bear but half the toils which I bear daily,
And shall bear lovingly.
First Crowd. Go to! surrender and have done with it.
Who thanks—who calls upon thee for thy toils?
Constan. That voice, which, in the hour of trial, bids
The good man give his soft and sensitive frame
To death and torture, and ev'n fearful woman
Bend her fair neck unto th' uplifted stroke,
Calls upon me—yea, and I will obey it!
Oth. By the good saints, he speaks like a brave man.
First Crowd. Acts he like one? will he come down to us?
(*Several speaking together.*) He does; he comes in truth!
(Constantine, *after speaking in dumb show to his friends, descends the stairs.*)
Second Crowd. Ay, in good faith, he comes unarmed too!
Constan. No, citizens, unarm'd I am not come;
For ev'ry good man here some weapon wears
For my defence.
Fourth Crowd. Yes, he says well; and we'll defend him too.
(*Several others.*) And so we will; huzza! huzza! huzza!
Long live brave Constantine, our noble Emperor!
(*Many speaking at once.*) No, no! peace and surrender is our call!
(*Raising loud cries, and brandishing their torches with violent threatening gestures.*)
Fourth Crowd. Hear him out, fools, and he'll perhaps consent
To hon'rable surrender.
Constan. (*to* Fourth Crowd, *and those who range themselves on his side.*)
No, friends; if in this hope with me ye stand,
Turn to your place again; for whilst I breathe,
With men enough in these encompass'd walls
To fire one gun, never shall Turkish banner
Upon our turrets wave. In this firm mind,
Upon those walls I am content to die,
By foe-men slain, or, if Heav'n wills it so,
Here on this spot, by those I will not name.
Oth. No! we will die first, be it as it may,
Ere one hair of thy noble head shall fall!
Crowd. (*on* Constantine's *side.*) Long live brave Constantine! brave Paleologus!
Huzza! huzza!
Crowd. (*on the opposite side.*) No; bread, and peace, and Mahomet, say we!
(*Both parties call out tumultuously, and threaten one another, and* Rodrigo, Justiniani, *and* Othus *rush down amongst them, leaving their other friends to guard the door of the palace.*)
Second Crowd. Ay, thou sea-lion! thou too needs must come
To growl upon us. (*To* Rodrigo.)
Rod. No, faith! I know you well: ye are at large
A set of soft, luxurious, timid slaves,
On whom a cat with muffled paws might mew,
And ye would turn from it.—But still amongst you,
I would upon it pledge my main and claws,
There are some honest souls who have ere now
Quaff'd their full bumpers to a brave man's health,
And I, in sooth, am come, with their good leave,

To shake hands with them all. *Holding out his hand invitingly to the opposite crowd.*)
Come; who loves valiant worth and Paleologus,
Give me his hand.
(*Many of the crowd giving him their hands.*)
There is one for thee.
(*Second.*) Ay, and there.
(*Third.*) And there.
Rod. (*to one who hesitates.*) And thou too, for thou wear'st upon thy brow
A soldier's look: I must perforce have thee.
(*Casting up his hat in the air, and joined by all the crowd on his side.*)
Long live brave Constantine! huzza!
(*This they continue to do till the opposite party are dispirited and beat off the stage.* Rodrigo *then presents his newly-acquired friends to* Constantine.)
Con. I thank you all, my brave and zealous friends.
Within the palace walls I'll now conduct you,
And martial there my new-gain'd strength, for which
I give Heaven thanks.
(Exeunt Constantine, *followed by his friends, &c.* Rodrigo *walking last, and just about to go off the stage, when* Othoric *re-enters by the opposite side, and calls after him.*)
Oth. Hark ye! a word with ye, my noble captain.
Rod. (*returning.*) What would'st thou say?
Oth. Look on my face; my name is Othoric;
I'm strong, thou see'st, and have a daring soul:
Look on my face; my name is Othoric:
Think'st thou thou shalt remember me, tho' thou
Should'st ne'er again behold me?
Rod. I shall, my friend: thou hast a daring countenance.
Oth. My deeds shall not belie it. With this crowd
I came, a stranger of most desp'rate fortune,
And hir'd by treach'rous men fell work to do.
But now, unhir'd, I'll do for your brave master
A deed that shall make Turkish ears to tingle,
And Christian too, or fail it or succeed.
Rod. What wilt thou do?
Oth. The consciousness of what one arm performs
Let one heart keep.
Rod. Heaven aid and prosper then thy secret thought,
If it be good and honest! Fare thee well!
[Exeunt *severally.*

Scene II.—A small narrow street, before a private sombre-looking house.

Enter Othus and Rodrigo.

Othus. Move slowly here, for now we pass the fane
In which the mystic vision-seeing sage
To ears of faith speaks his wild oracles.
Rod. What, he of whom we've heard such marv'llous things?
Othus. Yes; such perturbed times his harvest prove,
When anxious minds, in dread of coming ill,
Would draw aside, impatiently, the veil
Of dark futurity.—Softly, I pray:
A female form now issues from the door:
It moves, methinks, like Ella.

Enter Ella from the house with a female Attendant.

Rod. (*eagerly.*) It is herself, and I will speak to her.
Fair maid, as well I guess by that light trip,
Thy lover's fate hangs on a lucky thread;
Tough and well whiten'd in a kindly sun.
Ella. Well hast thou guess'd: fortune is passing kind;
She leads thee, fights for thee, and guards thy head
From ev'ry foe-man's stroke.
Rod. Ay, but thy lover, Ella; was it not
Of him we spoke?
Ella. Fye, do not mock me thus!
Othus. In truth he mocks thee, Ella, and no faith
To fates foretold or mystic sages gives.
Rod. Believe him not, sweet maid. We seamen, truly,
Small dealings have with learn'd sorcery;
Nor bead, nor book, nor ring, nor mutter'd rhymes,
Are for our turn: but on the sea-rock's point,
In shape of hern, or gull, or carrion bird,
Our unfed wizards sit, and, with stretch'd throats,
Speak strange mysterious things to wave-toss'd men,
With many perils compass'd. Nay, ofttimes
The mermaid, seated on her coral stool,
Spreading her yellow hair to the sunn'd breeze,
Will sing a song of future fortunes fair
To him who has the luck to meet with her:
And ev'n the nightly winds will thro' our shrouds
Distinctive voices utter unto those,
Who in their storm-rock'd cradles lie and think
Of their far-distant homes.—I do believe
That all good fortune shall betide thy love,
Being thy love; for that doth far outdo
All other fortune; and besides, no doubt,
A fair and courtly youth.
Ella. Go to! go to! thou mockest me again!
I love a brave man——
Rod. And not passing fair,
Nor very courtly?
Othus. No, nor wearing now

His youth's best bloom; but somewhat weather-beaten,
And sunn'd on sultry shores?

Ella. Fie on you both, you hold me in derision!
I'm young, and all unlearn'd, and well I know
Not passing sage; but do I merit this?
(*Turns to go away from them in tears.*)

Rod. By heavens, thou shalt not go!
(*Catching hold of her hand to prevent her.*)
Thou sweetest thing
That e'er did'st fix its lightly-fibred sprays
To the rude rock, ah! would'st thou cling to me?
Rough and storm-worn I am: but if thou lov'st me,—
Thou truly dost, I will love thee again
With true and honest heart, tho' all unmeet
To be the mate of such sweet gentleness.

Othus. I hear a noise of footsteps: we'll retire;
Let us pursue our way.
(*Looking behind as they go off.*)
'Tis one belonging to Valeria's train,
Who hither comes with quick and eager gait.
[Exeunt.

SCENE III.—A LARGE SOMBRE ROOM, WITH MYSTICAL FIGURES AND STRANGE CHARACTERS PAINTED UPON THE WALLS, AND LIGHTED ONLY BY ONE LAMP, BURNING UPON A TABLE NEAR THE FRONT OF THE STAGE.

Enter a CONJUROR in a long loose robe, and PETRONIUS, meeting him, by opposite sides.

Pet. Well, my good sage, how thrives thy mystic trade?
Go all things prosperously?

Con. As thou couldst wish: to many a citizen
I have the fix'd decree of fate foretold,
Which to the sultan gives this mighty city,
Making all opposition and defence
Vain; and their superstition works for us
Most powerfully.

Pet. So far 'tis well; but be thou on thy guard;
I am expressly come to caution thee.
Should any visit thee, whom thou suspectest
To be connected with th' imperial friends,
Be sure thy visions speak to them of things
Pleasant to loyal ears.

Con. Fear not; I have already been forewarn'd,
And have such caution follow'd.

Pet. Thou hast done wisely: still keep on thy guard,
And be not ev'n surpris'd if thou, ere long,
Should'st have a royal visitor. My agents,
Who in th' imperial palace are on watch,
Have giv'n me notice that Valeria's mind
Is this way bent. If so, let thy delusions
Still tempt her in the city to remain,
For herein is the sultan much concern'd.
Hush! we are interrupted.

Enter a SERVANT.

Ser. (*to* Conjuror.) A noble matron craves to speak with thee.

Con. Dost thou not know her?

Ser. No; in a black stole
She's closely veil'd; yet noble is her gait;
And her attendant underneath his cloak,
But ill conceal'd, wears an imperial crest.

Pet. and Con. (*both together.*) Can it indeed be she? (*Pausing to consider.*)

Con. I'll venture it. (*to* Servant.) Go and conduct her hither. [Exit Servant.
It must be she: I'll boldly venture it.

Pet. Thou may'st with little risk: meantime, remember
The caution I have given thee.

Con. Trust to my skill, and be a while withdrawn,
My noble patron. [Exit Petronius.

Enter VALERIA, concealed under a long black stole, followed by LUCIA and two female Attendants, who remain at the bottom of the stage whilst she comes forward.

Con. Approach, great dame.

Val. Yes, in misfortunes so;
That is my eminence: and unto thee
I come, an anxious suitor, if that truly
Th' unseen mysterious powers with whom thou deal'st,
To human weal and woe alliance bear,
And may unto the care-rack'd mind foreshew
The path o fawful fate that lies before it.
I do beseech thee!——

Con. Say thou dost command;
For thro' that sable stole, were it as thick
As midnight's curtain, still I could behold
Thy keenly-glancing eye, and the dark arch
Of royal brows accustom'd to command.

Val. Ha! dost thou see me?

Con. Yea; and who is he,
Whose shadowy unreal form behind thee towers,
As link'd with thine, tho' absent? O'er his head
Th' imperial eagle soars, and in his hand
He grasps the emblem of supreme command.

Val. (*throwing back the stole with astonishment mixed with fear.*)
O, most mysterious and wonderful!
Nothing is hid from thee: thou see'st afar
The distant death's day of the swathed babe,
Falling in hoary age, and the life's morn
Of those who are not.—Here then all confess'd,
A wretched empress and a trembling wife,
I stand before thee. O let thy keen eye
Thro' the dark mist that limits nature's sight,
Follow that phantom o'er whose head doth soar
Th' imperial bird! for, be it good or ill,
His fate is mine, and in his fate alone
I seek to know it.

Con. And hast thou strength to bear it? art thou firm?

For that which smites mine eye must smite thine ear.

Val. (*alarmed.*) Thou reck'nest then to look on dreadful things?

Con. I may or may not; but with mind not brac'd
In its full strength, seek not thy fate to know.

Val. (*after a hesitating pause of great agitation.*) I can bear all things but the dread uncertainty
Of what I am to bear.

Con. Then shall it be unto thee as thou wilt.

(*After some mysterious motions and muttering to himself, he turns his face towards the bottom of the stage, as if he had his eye steadfastly fixed upon some distant point; and continues so for some time without moving, whilst she stands watching his countenance eagerly, with her face turned to the front of the stage.*)

Val. (*impatiently, after a pause*) O! what dost thou behold?

Con. Nay, nothing yet but the dark formless void.
Be patient and attend.———I see him now:
On the tower'd wall he stands: the dreadful battle
Roars round him. Thro' dark smoke, and sheeted flames,
And showers of hurtling darts, and hissing balls,
He strides: beneath his sword falls many a foe:
His dauntless breast to the full tide of battle
He nobly gives.—Still on thro' the dark storm
Mine eye pursues him to his fate's high cope—

Val. His fate's high cope! merciful, awful Heaven! (*After a pause.*)
O, wherefore dost thou pause? thine eyes roll terribly:
What dost'thou see? thou look'st on things most dreadful!
O look not thus, but say what thou dost see!

Con. I see a frowning chief, the crescent's champion,
In bold defiance meet thy valiant lord.
The fight is fierce and bloody.———

Val. Again thou pausest yet more terribly.—
Hast thou no utterance for what thou seest?
O God! O God! thou look'st upon his death!
(*Clasping her hands violently.*)
Dost thou not speak? wilt thou not answer me?
Thou look'st upon his death!

Con. I look on nothing, for thy frantic terrors
Have broke the fabric of my air shap'd vision,
And all is blank.

Val. And will it not return to thee again?
O fix thine eyes, and to it bend thy soul
Intently, if it still may rise before thee,
For thou hast made me frantic!

Con. (*after a pause, and fixing his eyes as before.*) The forms again return—
The champions meet: the fight is fierce and terrible:
The fatal stroke is given; and Constantine———

Val. Merciful Heaven!

Con. And Constantine lays the proud crescent low.

Val. (*pausing for a moment as if to be assured that she had heard right, and then holding up her hands in extacy.*)
It is! it is! O words of bliss!—Thou see'st it!
My Constantine lays the proud crescent low!
Thou look'st upon it truly; and their forms
Before thee move, ev'n as the very forms
Of living men?

Con. Even so.

Val. O blessed sight!
It is not witch'ry's spell, but holy spirits
Sent from a gracious heav'n that shapes such forms;
And be it lawless or unhallow'd deem'd,
Here will I kneel in humble gratitude.

Con. (*preventing her from kneeling.*) No, no, this must not be: attend again:
There's more behind.

Val. Ha! say'st thou more behind?—Or good or evil?

Con. Mixed I ween: 'tis still in darkness lapp'd.

Val. In darkness let it rest: I've heard enough.
I would not look upon thine eyes again,
And in my fancy shape thy unseen sights,
For all that e'er———Is that which lies behind
A far extended vision? (*Pausing anxiously.*)
Thou wilt not answer me—well, rest it so.
But yet, O forward look for one short year,
And say who then shall be this city's lord.

Con. Thy husband and thy lord, most mighty dame,
Shall at that period be this city's lord.

Val. Then I am satisfied. Thou hast my thanks,
My very grateful thanks. There is thy recompense,
And this too added. (*Giving him a purse, and then a ring from her hand.*)
We shall meet again
In happier days, when the proud crescent's low,
And thou shalt have a princely recompense.
(*Turning to her Attendants as she goes away.*)
Come, Lucia; come, my friends; the storm will pass,
And we shall smile in the fair light of heaven
In happier days. [Exit, *followed by her Attendants.*

Con. (*looking at his reward.*) Good sooth, this almost smites against my heart;
But goes she not far happier than she came?
Have I not earn'd it well?

Re-enter PETRONIUS.

Pet. Thou hast well earn'd it.
What! harbour such poor scruples in a breast
So exercised in a trade like this?
Fye on't! But if thy conscience is so nice,
Know that thou hast in all good likelihood
Predicted truly; and her lord and husband
Shall be still, as thou say'st, this city's lord.

Con. How so?

Pet. Hast thou not skill enough to guess?
Much has the sultan of Valeria heard;
And, with the future beauties of his palace,
His fancy, in the most distinguish'd rank,
Already places her. Thou wilt ere long,
I can foretell by certain fleeting shapes
Which at this moment dance before mine eyes,
A favour'd, famous, courtly prophet be.
My little Ella too, taught by my art,
May play, perhaps her part; and so together
We'll amicably work.—May it not be?
Put up thy gold, and say it is well earn'd.

Con. It must be had, and therefore must be earn'd,
Falsely or honestly.—Does Constantine,
As speaks this morning's rumour, send again
Another embassy to Mahomet
With terms of peace?

Pet. He does, my friend: already in the palace,
He, and his band of self-devoted fools,
Deliberate on it. Thou, at no great risk,
May'st prophesy the issue of their counsels.

Con. I have adventured upon bolder guessing.

Pet. Excepting that slight aid from Genoa,
Which by the master of a coasting vessel,
Kept secretly on watch, I am inform'd
Is now almost within sight of the coast,
No hope remains to Constantine. And this
Shall not deceive him long; for I've dispatch'd,
In a swift-sailing skiff, a trusty agent,
Who shall with costly bribes and false reports
Deter their boldness from all desp'rate efforts
To force a passage to the block'd-up port:
A thing Rodrigo's bold success alone
Hath taught us to believe e'en possible.

Con. Thanks for your information, my good lord:
I'll profit by it

Pet. But use it prudently. And so good day.
Well thrive thy trade, and all good luck attend us. [EXEUNT *severally.*

SCENE IV.—AN APARTMENT IN THE IMPERIAL PALACE, WITH A VIEW THROUGH A GRAND ARCHED DOOR OF ANOTHER APARTMENT, IN WHICH ARE DISCOVERED CONSTANTINE, OTHUS, JUSTINIANI, RODRIGO, AND OTHERS, ARISING FROM A COUNCIL TABLE. THEY ENTER AND COME FORWARD.

Constan. Well, my brave friends, I to your care intrust
This last attempt by honourable treaty
To gain peace from the foe. Heav'n bless your efforts.

Just. All that strict honour will permit to us
Shall be most truly done, imperial lord,
And one step farther on we cannot go.

Constan. Had I wish'd more than this, Justiniani,
I had sent other ministers.——
Heav'n bless your efforts, brave ambassadors,
And make you wise as brave!
If we succeed not,
As much I fear, it is my earnest wish,
Ere the grand push that shall our fate decide,
To meet you all in blessed charity,
And join with you, perhaps in the last rites
Of christian worship that within our walls
Shall e'er be celebrated.

Othus. Your wish shall be fulfill'd: we all desire it.

Constan. I thank you. In an hour hence be prepar'd
To set out for the sultan's camp. So, brothers,
Good day, and all good favour.

[EXEUNT *all but* Constantine *and* Othus.

Constan. (*to* Othus *as he is about to go after the others.*) Wilt thou go also, Othus?

Othus. Not if your highness does command my stay.

Constan. Ah, gentle friend! I do no more command!
But this distresses thee. Well, gen'rous man,
Thou art commanded. (*Pointing to a seat, and they both sit.*)
Here, by thy friendly side,
I'll give my heart a little breathing space;
For oh! the gen'rous love of these brave men,
Holding thus nobly to my sinking fate,
Presses it sorely.
From thee, nor from myself can I conceal
The hopeless state in which I am beset.
No foreign prince a brother's hand extends
In this mine hour of need; no christian state
Sends forth its zealous armies to defend
This our begirded cross: within our walls,
Tho' with th' addition of our later friends,
I cannot number soldiers ev'n sufficient
To hold a petty town 'gainst such vast odds.
I needs must smile and wear a brow of hope,
But with thee, gentle Othus, I put off
All form and seeming; I am what I am,
A weak and heart-rent man.—Wilt thou forgive me?
For I in truth must weep.

Othus. Yes, unrestrained weep, thou valiant soul

With many a wave o'er-ridden! Thou striv'st nobly
Where hearts of sterner stuff perhaps had sunk:
And o'er thy fall, if it be so decreed,
Good men will mourn, and brave men will shed tears,
Kindred to those which now thou shedd'st. Thy name
Shall in succeeding ages be remember'd
When those of mighty monarchs are forgot.

Constan. Deceive me not; thy love deceiveth thee.
Men's actions to futurity appear
But as th' events to which they are conjoin'd
Do give them consequence. A fallen state,
In age and weakness fall'n, no hero hath;
For none remained behind unto whose pride
The cherish'd mem'ry of his acts pertains.
O no, good Othus, fame I look not for.
But to sustain in heaven's all-seeing eye,
Before my fellow men, in mine own sight,
With graceful virtue and becoming pride,
The dignity and honour of a man,
Thus station'd as I am, I will do all
That man may do, and I will suffer all—
My heart within me cries, that man can suffer.
(*Starting up with vehemence, and holding up both hands firmly clenched.*)
For shall low-born men on scaffolds tread, firm
For that their humble townsmen should not blush,
And shall I shrink? No, by the living God!
I will not shrink, albeit I shed these tears.

Othus. To be in toils and perils, nay in sufferings,
With th' applauding sympathy of men
Upon his side, is to thy noble mind
A state of happiness beyond the bliss
Of calm inglorious ease.

Constan. O no, good Othus! thou misjudgest of me.
I would, God knows, in a poor woodman's hut
Have spent my peaceful days, and shar'd my crust
With her who would have cheer'd me, rather far
Than on this throne; but, being what I am,
I'll be it nobly.

Othus. Yes, thou wilt be it nobly, spirit as brave
As e'er wore Cæsar's name!

Constan. (*Smiling sorrowfully.*) Yes, there is cause for me; there is good cause.
But for those valiant men, link'd in my fate,
Who have in other lands their peaceful homes
And dear domestic ties, on whom no claim
Lays its strong hold—alas! what cause have they?
What is their recompense? Fame is not mine;
And unto them——O, this doth press my heart!
A heart surcharg'd with many cares, and press'd
With that besides, which more than all—with that
Which I have wrestled with—which I have strove—
With that which comes between me and myself—
The self that as a christian and a man
I strongly strove to be————

Othus. You have before some secret cause of trouble
Hinted in broken words: will not your highness
Unto a faithful friend——

Constan. (*turning away from him.*) No, no, good Othus!
Some times I dream like a distracted man,
And nurse dark fancies. Power and lawless will—
Defenceless beauty—Mahomet—Valeria—
Shape out of these wild words whate'er thou wilt,
For I can say no more.

Othus. Alas, I know it all!

Constan. And yet why should it thus disturb my mind?
A thought, perhaps, that in no other breast
Hath any shelter found. It is my weakness:
I am ashamed of it.—I can look
On my short-fated span and its dark bound:
I can, God strength'ning me, my earthly task
Close as becomes a king; and, being clos'd,
To that which in this world's tumultuous stage
Shall happen after it I am as nothing.

Othus. Alas! my royal master, do not thus
To racking thoughts give way! is there not means
To free you from this pain, if you to use them
Have courage? Let the empress be convey'd
Far from these walls. It is a cruel remedy,
But it will give you peace.

Constan. I did attempt it, but she has so closely
Entwin'd herself upon me—O, my friend,
It needs must pass! I in th' unconscious grave
Shall be at rest.

Othus. But does she know the nature of your fears?

Constan. O no! she does not! from that hateful subject,
As from a hideous serpent, still with her
I've kept aloof.—Alas! what can I do?
I could as well into her noble heart
Thrust the barb'd dart as tell her what I fear.

Othus. Perhaps she still, as from the common horrors
Of a sack'd town, may be conjur'd to flee.
And here she comes: be it at least attempted.

Enter VALERIA, LUCIA, and attendant Ladies.

Val. (*to* Constantine.) I come to claim thy promise: one short hour,
A hasty sunbeam thro' the cloud's dark skirt,
Thou giv'st to me, and I must claim my right.
Thy friends too, ere they go, shall be my guests:

I have brought powerful suitors to assist me.
(*Pointing to her ladies.*)
Ha! what disturbs thee? how is this, my love?
Thy face is chang'd and troubl'd—What new cause———

Constan. O, no new cause! one that has much disturb'd me.

Val. And one to me unknown?

Con. Speak to her, Othus!

Othus. By many various ills and cares oppress'd,
Your royal lord is still most closely touch'd
With that which does your weal regard. What fate
May, in a storm-ta'en city, of dire sights
And horrid cruelties, have in reserve,
If such the city's doom, who can foresee?
O, let him then his painful station hold,
Gen'rous Valeria! from one care reliev'd,
His heaviest care, the thought of leaving thee
The involv'd witness of such horrid things!

Val. What would'st thou say in this? Think'st thou the ruin
In which he perishes will have for me
Or form or circumstances? It will be
Th' upbreaking crash of all existing things,
That undistinguish'd is, and felt but once.
Othus, thou talk'st like an unskilful sage:
It was not thus thy master bade thee speak.

Constan. Valeria, hard necessity compels us.
I have already safe asylum sought
For the last tender remnant of our race,
That something might from this dire wreck be sav'd,
And shall I not for thee———

Val. No; I am nothing
But what I am for thee! When that is finish'd—

Constan. Ah my Valeria, but that will not finish!
Thou still may'st be for me—thou still may'st bear
Honour'd memorial amongst living men
Of him who was thy lord.—Good Lucia, aid me,
And gentle Servia too, and all of you!
(*To the Ladies.*)
Cling round your mistress with your soothing love,
And say that in a foreign land you'll be
The faithful friends and soothers of her woe,
Where ev'ry virtuous heart will bear to her
The kindred ties of holiest sympathy.
Say ye will be with her in kindliest zeal:
Ye will not leave her!

Lucia and the other Ladies. No, we'll never leave her!
(*Gathering round her affectionately.*)
Most dear and royal Mistress, whilst life holds,
In whate'er land, in whate'er state you are,
We'll never leave you.

Val. I know it well: thanks to your gen'rous love!
But yet forbear, nor thus beset me round.
(*Putting them gently from her, and fixing her eyes upon* Constantine.)
O, Paleologus! hast thou for me
In fancy shap'd a world and an existence
Where thou art not?
(*Running to him and falling on his neck.*)
Here is my world, my life, my land of refuge,
And to no other will I ever flee.
Here still is light and hope; turning from this,
All else is round me as a yawning tomb.

Constan. My dearest love! my gen'rous honour'd love!
My sweet Valeria! thou distractest me;
But have thy way, for I can urge no more.
Let dark fate come: I will abide its worst.

Val. Nay, say not dark; there is a hope within me;
'Tis sure, 'tis strong, it cannot be deceitful.
(*A signal heard from without.*)
Hark! hark! a signal!
(*Voices are heard calling without.*)
Ships are in sight! supplies and warlike aid!

Val (*holding up her hands.*) O blessed sound! there is salvation in it.
Heaven sends us aid!
(*Voices again call out as before and the signal is repeated.*)
Again the blessed sound!
And here Rodrigo comes, wearing a face
Of welcome tidings.

Enter Rodrigo.

Succours, brave Rodrigo?

Rod. Yes, ships from Genoa are now in sight,
Bearing, no doubt, brave aid, if to the port
They can make good their entrance.

(*All except* Constantine.) Good heaven be bless'd!

Constan. And say Rodrigo "if?"
(*Shaking his head.*)

Val. Nay, fear not, they will enter; with them comes
Another brave Rodrigo; thro' barr'd adamant,
Did it oppose them, they will force their way.

Rod. If they but have one jot of manhood in them,
They'll do all possible things.

Val. Ay, and all things are possible!

Constan. In truth, thou talk'st with such exulting confidence,
Thou almost temptest me to grasp at hope.
(*Voices call out as before, and a signal from the towers.*)

Val. The animating sound! Come, come! O, come!
And o'er the blue waves hail the blessed sight.
(*Runs out exultingly, every one following her with animated alacrity.*)

ACT III.

Scene I.—The Turkish camp: the tent of Mahomet, who is discovered sitting alone in the eastern manner, with a great sheet of

PARCHMENT SPREAD OUT BEFORE HIM, WHICH HE IS CONSIDERING ATTENTIVELY.

Ma. (*after tracing some lines with a pen or pencil.*) Ho, Osmir! art thou here?

Enter Osmir.

Come hither, vizir; follow with thine eye
The various dispositions of this plan
Which for our grand attack I here have traced.
God and the Prophet being on our side,
That mingled broil of fierce and dreadful fight,
Which shall not cease till from the list of nations
This eastern empire, with its long told line
Of paltry Cæsars, be expung'd and blank,
Shall not be long delay'd.

Osmir. All things must yield unto the towering spirit
And comprehensive genius of your highness.
Permit your slave. (*Looking over the plan.*)
Conceiv'd, indeed, with deep and wond'rous skill!
But mighty lord, if that a worm may speak,
Your van, methinks, is of a motley class,
The vile refuge and garbage of the camp;
Are mussulmen led on in glory's path
By such as these?

Ma. (*smiling fiercely.*) No; but brave mussulmen o'er such as these
May step to glory's path. Garbage, I trust,
Is good enough for filling ditches up.
Some thousand carcasses, living and dead,
Of those who first shall glut the en'my's rage,
Push'd in, pell-mell, by those who press behind,
Will rear for us a bridge to mount the breach
Where ablest engineers had work'd in vain.

Osmir. This did escape my more contracted thoughts.
And here your highness stations Georgian troops:
Are they sure men in such important service?

Ma. (*smiling again.*) Ay, sure as death; here is my surety for them.
See'st thou what warriors in the rear are plac'd,
With each a cord and hatchet in his hand?
Those grizly hangmen, in their canvas sleeves,
Fight for me better than an armed band
Of christian knights full cap-a-pee.—Look o'er it:
Something, perchance, may have escap'd my thoughts.

Osmir. (*after again examining it.*) No; every thing is consummately plann'd.—
But, mighty sultan, this old officer,
Whom you have station'd here with your new troops,
Is not to be relied on.

Ma. How so, Osmir?

Osmir. It is suspected that he has receiv'd
The en'my's gold; one thing, at least, is certain,
He has had private meetings with the foe.

Ma. What! art thou sure of this?—Send for him quickly.
The fool midst blocks and bowstrings has so long
His base head tott'ring worn, he thinks, no doubt,
It needs must be his own. Send for him quickly,
And see that which is needful done upon him.
(*Drawing the pen sternly across the name on the plan.*)
There; from the world of living things I blot him;
Another takes his place.
(*Giving a paper to* Osmir.)
These are the usual orders for the night;
Assemble thou the sev'ral officers,
And give to each his own particular charge.

Osmir. Your slave obeys. [Exit.

Ma. (*alone, after musing for a little while.*)
Have I done well to give this hoary vet'ran,
Who has for thirty years fought in our wars,
To the death-cord unheard?
(*Sternly, after pausing a short space.*)
I have done well.
In my disguised rounds, but two nights since,
List'ning at his tent door, I heard him speak
Words that methought approach'd to slight esteem
Of my endowments and capacity.
Yes, he is guilty. (*After walking up and down several times he opens another scroll.*)
But I will fear no treason: here is that
On which I may rely. In mortal man
I have no trust; they are all hollow slaves,
Who tremble and detest, and would betray.
But on the fates, and the dark secret powers,
So say those sure unerring calculations
Of deep astrology, I may depend.
(*Sitting down again, and considering the scroll.*)
Ay, it must needs be so: this constellation
In close conjunction with the warrior's star,
Trac'd back in magic numbers three times three,
And nine times nine, and added three again,
Unto the hour of my nativity,
Makes it infallible. Here have I mark'd it
With mine own science, num'ral, learn'd, and sure.
Ha! ha! your foolish christians now believe
Men's future fortunes are by wizards seen,
In airy forms pourtray'd, like mimick shows,
And trust thereto with fond simplicity.
(Othoric, *who about the middle of this speech has made his appearance from behind the curtain of the tent, disguised like a Turk, but without a turban, now, stealing close up to* Mahomet, *lifts up his dagger to strike.*)
What do I hear?

Oth. It is thy fate, blind Turk, uncalculated.
(*Striking.*)

Ma. (*parrying the blow with his sheathed scimitar which he afterwards draws.*)
Ho! help without! treason and parricide!

Ho! guards without, I say! (*Guards rush in and* Othoric *is seized, after defending himself desperately.*)

Ma. (*To* Othoric.) Who art thou? What dark tyrant set thee on
To do this murderous and horrid deed?

Oth. And think'st thou such deeds horrid? —But I came
To act and not to speak.

Ma. Say rather, villain, to be acted on.
Do racks and burning iron please thee well
That thou should'st earn them with such desp'rate pains.
(*To the Guards.*) Stretch out his arms, and let me look on them. *Looking at his arms, and surveying him all over, he shrinks back as from a danger escaped, and then smiles*
There will be tough work on those sinewy limbs
When they are dealt with.—Lead the traitor off.
I will give orders for his fate ere long.
(*To* Othoric, *who is about to speak.*)
Thou shalt not speak: I hate thy horrible face.
Lead him away! [Exit Othoric *and Guards, met by* Petronius *and* Marthon, *who enter as they are going out.*

Pet. What prisoner is this they lead along?

Ma. A dark assassin in my tent conceal'd,
Whose daring hand ev'n now aim'd at my life.

Pet. (*casting up his eyes to heaven.*) The life of great and godlike Mahomet!
It makes my blood turn cold.

Mar. I too am stunn'd and tremble at the thought.

Ma. Yes, all may tremble who in the dark purpose
Have part or knowledge had.
(Petronius *and* Marthon *both alarmed.*)
What means my lord? (Mahomet *walks several times across the stage with angry strides, whilst they look fearfully upon one another, and then going sternly up to them.*)

Ma. I know the base transactions of last night:
Ye stuff'd my gold into the dirty palms
Of those who shook their torches in the air,
And cried long live brave Paleologus.
I know it all: think ye with upcast looks,
And mumm'ry such as this, to blind mine eyes?

Pet. (*falling on his knees.*) As there's a God in heav'n, to you, great sultan,
We have been true! (Marthon *kneels also.*)

Ma. Up, crouching slaves! when men so bred as you are
Thus lowly kneel, my very soul abhors them.

Pet. Your death, great monarch, were to Paleologus
Triumph and safety, but to us swift ruin.

Mar. And shall suspicions so improbable
Fall upon us, who in your secret service
Have dangers brav'd, and from your hands alone
Look for the recompense?

Pet. If we last night have fail'd——

Ma. (*stamping with his foot.*) I will not hear you!

Enter Osmir.

Osmir, know'st thou this horrible attempt?

Osmir. I do, great prince, and bless the Prophet's arm
That has preserv'd you. What base enemy
Has arm'd the desp'rate villain?

Ma. Petronius here and his smooth Grecian friend
Throw accusation on the emperor.

Osmir. This moment in your camp there is arriv'd
An embassage of his most honour'd friends,
Sent by the emperor to treat of peace.

Ma. At this unlikely hour?

Osmir. Yes, time now presses, and, as I should guess,
The hopes of succour from those friendly vessels
That vainly have attempted through your fleets
To force a passage, raising short-liv'd joy
Full soon extinguished, has to this late hour
Delay'd their coming.
Hope gone, they now are humbled suitors. Here,
Within your power, you have the chiefest men
Of the brave friends on whom he most depends;
This does not look like preconcerted plots
Of secret murder, at this very hour
To be attempted.

Ma. No, Osmir, there is reason in thy words.

Osmir. But if your highness thinks it is expedient,
I will straightway arrest them.

Ma. (*after hesitating.*) No, no; they are valiant men, and do as such
Claim honour from a valiant foe. Go say,
That by the morning's dawn they shall have audience;
The open camp, with wide-mouth'd cannon cloth'd,
And all my lofty garniture of war,
Shall be my hall of state. Secure those men
Until my farther orders. (*Pointing to* Petronius *and* Marthon, *and* Exit, *followed by* Osmir. *Remain* Petronius *and* Marthon *guarded.*)

First Guard. Come on, my masters, we'll conduct you safely.

Mar. (*to* Petronius.) It is to plunge me in this dreadful gulf
That your curs'd lessons have seduc'd my youth?

Pet. Upbraid me not. I have not for myself
A better fate reserv'd. But we are noble,
And of high lineage; fear not, for the sultan
Will still respect us.

Second Guard. Ay, so belike he will; your noble heads

May with the royal scimitar be chopt,
If he is much inclin'd to honour you.
Some men ere now, in other sultans' days,
Have been so honour'd. [EXEUNT.

SCENE II.—AN OPEN SPACE IN THE CAMP, WITH THE JANIZARIES AND TURKISH TROOPS DRAWN UP IN ORDER. CANNON AND WARLIKE ENGINES SEEN MIXED WITH THE TENTS. A FLOURISH OF TRUMPETS.

Enter MAHOMET, with OSMIR and his train, and places himself in a chair of state near the front of the stage. Another flourish of trumpets, and enter OTHUS, JUSTINIANI, and RODRIGO, with a small train of Attendants, walking slowly up the stage.

Ma. (*to* Osmir, *as they come forward.*) These men approach us with a hardy step,
Nor wear the suppliant's humbled brow. Come they
To sue or to command us? (*To* Othus *and the other deputies, who make obeisance to him.*)
You are permitted to declare your errand.
If your hard-lesson'd chief, more prudent grown,
Will now resign his proud imperial city
Into the hands to whom high heaven's decree,
And power on earth resistless, soon shall give it,
I will receive that which he cannot hold
With grace and favour.

Othus. High heaven's decrees are known to mortal man
But in th' event fulfill'd; and for earth's power,
The cannon flanked cohorts, and the wide front
Of far extended numbers, shew it not
To him, who in the small and secret fortress,
E'en of one brave man's breast, more help discovers,
Oft in th' astounding hour of the storm's pitch,
Than in an armed host. Imperial Constantine
Will live or die within his city's walls
As may become their master.—Nevertheless,
He will so far to hard necessity———

Ma. I hear no more: your words are ineffectual,
And fall as powerless as the ruffian's sword,
Whom now, within my tent, your royal master,
Compell'd no doubt by hard necessity,
Has hired to murder me.

Jus. (*stepping boldly forward.*) Sultan, thou sittest where thou safely may'st
Say what thou wilt, therefore of all mankind
Thou most art bound to say but what is meet.
Put those accusing words that thou hast utter'd
Into the mouth of any other Turk,
Wore he a giant's form, for in your camp
I know that such there be, and I will prove it,
With this good soldier's arm, a cursed falsehood.

Othus. (*to* Justiniani, *pulling him back.*)
Thou art not wise.—Great sultan hear me speak.
If any base attack upon your life
Has been attempted, let the murd'rous villain,
If still he breathes, be here before us brought.
In presence of your highness we will question him:
Perchance he will confess what secret foe
Has arm'd his daring hand.

Ma. (*after giving orders to a guard in dumb show, who immediately goes out.*)
Your suit is granted.
These men speak boldly, vizir.
(*Aside to* Osmir.)

Osmir. (*aside to* Mahomet.) They shrink not from the proof.

Enter OTHORIC fettered and guarded.

Ma. (*to* Othoric.) As thou may'st hope a mitigated doom,
I here command thee that thou truly answer
Whate'er those Roman deputies demand.

Oth. I do not hope a mitigated doom,
And therefore, sultan, cannot be commanded:
But if this brave man here will question me,
(*Pointing to* Rodrigo.)
For in his presence I do feel my spirit
To manhood's height brac'd up, I'll truly answer,
Tho' every word did in my sinews fix
The burning pincer's tooth.

Rod. Ha! Othoric art thou not? the strong Hungarian?

Oth. (*smiling.*) Ay, thou rememberest my name—I thank thee—
It pleases me to think thou'lt ne'er forget it.
Ask what thou wilt, and I will answer thee;
Bid me do what thou wilt, and I will do it,
Barring the hind'rance of these chains.

Rod. Thanks to thee!
Then, whatsoe'er the sultan asks of thee,
Answer him truly. He will point his questions
Where his suspicion points.

Oth. I will obey.

Ma. (*sternly.*) Who hired thee, thou bold and hard-brow'd villain,
Such horrid deed to do?

Oth. I have been twice hired, mighty Mahomet,
To do fell deeds, in which I've lack'd performance.

Ma. And who first hired thee?

Oth. Thyself.

Ma. Base traitor!
Dar'st thou belie me to my very face?

Oth. That I belie thee not be this my token;
My hire was given to me by Petronius,
Told from a sable bag, on whose seal'd mouth
Thy scimitar and crescent were impress'd.

Othus. Petronius!

Oth. Yes, that smooth, subtle Greek.

Ma. He hir'd thee not to take the life of Constantine?

Oth. True; I was hir'd for wasteful insurrection,
Not for delib'rate murder. Tho' most wretched,
A stranger, grip'd by hard necessity,
The price he gave me ne'er had bought this arm
To such an act.

Ma. And who did hire thee for this second deed,
Which thou must needs delib'rate murder call?

Oth. 'Twas Constantine.

Jus. Thou liest, foul, artful villain!

Ma. Peace I command! ye shall not interrupt him.
'Twas Constantine that hir'd thee?

Oth. Yes, great sultan!
But not with gold, and he himself, I ween,
Unconscious of the act.

Ma. What did he bribe thee with?

Oth. With that which does but seldom prove the means
Of like corruption—gen'rous admiration
Of noble manly virtue. I beheld him,
Like a brave stag encompass'd by base curs,
And it did tempt me.—Other bribe than this
Have I had none; and to no mortal ear
Did I reveal my purpose.

(Mahomet *puts his hand on his forehead and seems disturbed, whilst the deputies hold up their hands exultingly.*)

Rod. (*to* Othoric.) O for a galley mann'd with such as thou art,
Therewith to face a hundred armed ships,
Creatur'd with meaner life!
Yet thou must die, brave heart! yet thou must die.
Thou hast done that which in no circumstance
Man's hand may do, and therefore thou must perish.
But I'll remember thee: thy name is Othoric:
I will remember thee.

Osmir. (*to* Mahomet, *who covers his face and seems disturb'd, after a pause.*)
Your highness gives no orders to your slave
Touching the prisoner.

Ma. (*uncovering his face angrily.*) His crime is plain: death be his instant doom.

Osmir. And in what mode? of simple or with pains?

Ma. Distract me not.

Oth. Vizir, be not so hasty.
I bear with me what will redeem my life,
And gain the sultan's pardon.

Osmir. Ah! thinkest thou to gain him with that bribe
Which Constantine gave thee? (*Shaking his head.*)

Oth. No, not with that. I wear upon this arm
A potent band, with subtile magic wrought,
That, wheresoe'er 'tis on my body rubb'd
With mutter'd words which I alone do know,
Maketh the part firm and invulnerable
To sword, or bullet, or the arrow's point—
To all offensive things. Believe me not,
But see the proof.—Relieve mine arms, I pray,
That I may shew this wonder.

Ma. Unlock his fetters: if he tamper with us,
His tortures are enhanced.

Oth. (*to the guard who stands next him, after he has been unfettered, and at the same time uncovering his left arm.*)
Young Turk, thou wear'st a dagger by thy side:
To shew that I am made as other men,
Of flesh and blood as soft and sensitive,
When with no charm secur'd, thrust it, I pray thee
Into this nerved flesh. Nay, do not shrink,
For I shrink not.

Ma. Do it, thou timid slave!

(*The guard slightly wounds* Othoric's *arm with the point of the dagger.*)

Oth. You see it is an arm of flesh and blood;
And so you'll find my body in all parts,
Thrust where you will.—But mark me; wheresoe'er
I rub this band, your weapons have no power.

(*Opening his breast and rubbing it with a bracelet which he takes from his arm, at the same time muttering some mystical words to himself.*)
Now try if e'er the stoutest arm amongst you,
With pike, or spear, or keenly-temper'd blade,
Can pierce this charmed breast.

Ma. (*to an Attendant.*) Attempt it, brawny slave; thine arm is strong.
(*To* Osmir.) Give him a stronger weapon.—Now the proof!

(*The slave receiving a sword from* Osmir, *runs with full force upon* Othoric, *who falls down, pierced through the breast, and utters a convulsive laugh as he expires.*)

Rod. (*exultingly.*) O, bravely done, thou spirit of true proof!

Jus. Yes, nobly has he shunn'd the degradation
Of slavish punishment.

Othus. It was a lofty mind in a rude state
Of wild distorted virtue; cross the fancy
It stalks a gloomy, dark, gigantic shade,
Angel or fiend we know not.

Ma. (*aside to himself, turning gloomily away.*) And Constantine is serv'd by men like these!

Othus. (*to* Mahomet.) Seeing that of this crime our royal master
Doth clearly stand acquitted, by your word,
Most mighty Mahomet, we are permitted
To state his wishes.

Ma. No, ambassadors;
I have already said I hear no more
Unless ye yield the city.—Leave ye have
In safety to return.—You and your chief
O'er a volcano's thinly bridged gulf
Have ta'en your stand, and the dire crash is near.

Othus. And with our chief in that tremendous ruin,
If it must be, we will sink lovingly.
Jus. We will sink honourably.
Rod. We will sink gloriously. Ay, by heaven's light,
And cheerly too, great sultan! (*Passing the body of* Othoric *as they turn to go away*.)
Thou noble wreck, thou wert rigg'd gallantly!
(Exeunt Othus, Justiniani, Rodrigo, *and their attendants*.)
Ma. (*coming forward to the front of the stage, and standing for some time in a thoughtful posture much disturbed*.)
And Constantine is serv'd by men like these!
Osmir. (*to slaves, pointing to the body of* Othoric.) Take up the carcass of that savage ruffian,
And stick it on a stake for vulture's food.
Ma. (*turning round angrily*.) No, reptiles! let it have a soldier's grave.
Osmir. This is exceeding mercy; ne'ertheless,
Your orders, mighty prince, shall be obey'd
By those who are as dust beneath your feet.
Ma. Yes, I do know that I shall be obey'd.
By those who are——— I am begirt with slaves.
(*Turning away, and stamping on the ground as he walks*.)
Mine enemy is serv'd by men like these!
I will give orders with all pressing speed
That now my grand attack forthwith be made:
What next may be attempted by such foes
Who may divine.
Osmir. That is the safest counsel.
(Exeunt Mahomet, *tossing his arms and muttering as he goes out*.)

ACT IV.

Scene I.—an out-post belonging to the turkish camp, with a view of the city of constantinople on the back ground, seen in the dimness of cloudy moonlight.

Enter several Turkish Soldiers by different ways, meeting one another.

First Turk. Ho! who are ye? our friends?
Second Turk. I know thy voice.
First Turk. Yes, we are friends; but let us separate,
And gain our tents as quickly as we may:
For now thro' all the camp the busy stir
Of warlike preparation is begun;
And ere the morning dawn, each armed Turk
Must hold him ready for th' approaching day
Of havock, blood, and spoil. Come, let us on!
Third Turk. Yes; but, good comrades, do once more look back,
And see, thro' the wan night, those buildings gleam
With the last Christian fires that e'er shall burn
Within those circling walls.
Second Turk. Ay, there the Prophet has prepar'd our rest.
There soon, midst heap'd-up spoils, and the wild wailings
Of fetter'd beauty, in our new-won homes,
We'll cast our reeking scimitars aside,
And lay us down in soft and lordly sloth.
Comrades, it is an animating sight.
But quickly let us gain our tents.—Hush! hush!
What Turk comes prowling this way, and alone?
It looks like Mahomet.
First Turk. It is the sultan on his nightly rounds,
Disguis'd: let us avoid him.
Third Turk. I'd rather cross a tiger on my way;
For, as the humour hits, it may be fatal
To know or not to know him. At the best
We shall be deem'd but lawless stragglers here:
Let us all separate and gain our tents.
[Exeunt *hastily, all different ways*.

Enter Mahomet disguised, followed at a distance by the Vizer.

Ma. (*alone, after walking thoughtfully from the bottom of the stage, whilst* Osmir *remains on the back ground*.)
What boots this restless wish? 'tis all blank silence
On that for which my greedy ears still watch.
There's ne'er a Turk, who, o'er his ev'ning pipe,
Will not far rather talk of daring feats
By petty robbers done, than all the fame
And grand achievements of his sov'reign lord.
'Tis cheerless silence all! Dull, stupid race!
They arm them for to-morrow's fight, 'tis true,
With much alacrity, and talk of conquest,
Carnage, and spoils; but for their sultan's name,
The name of Mahomet, thro' all the camp
I've scarcely heard its sound. Nay, once I heard it
In accents harsh pronounc'd, but as to listen
I nearer drew, my steps the speaker scar'd,
And all was into fearful silence hush'd.
Their sultan's name!—Pest seize the stupid slaves!
O, Constantine! it is not thus thy soldiers
Do arm themselves for thee.
Ho, Osmir! art thou near me?
Osmir. (*advancing*.) Yes, my lord.
Ma. Hast thou been list'ning too?
Osmir. Yes, sultan; and I find your Mussulmen
Their arms preparing for to-morrow's battle,
Beneath your royal standard most determin'd
To conquer or to die.

They under your approving eye will fight,
As in the sunshine of propitious heaven.

Ma. Yes, I am in their minds full truly grown
A thing of gen'ral attributes compos'd—
A heaven of sunshine or of lowering storms:
But as a man and leader, in whom live
The mental and corporeal qualities
Of Mahomet ——— Pest seize the stupid slaves!

Enter PETRONIUS and MARTHON, muffled up in cloaks.

But who comes here? twice on my rounds already
Those men have cross'd me: am I known to them?
By the great Prophet they shall bear their secret
Where secrets are secure!—Ho! stop slaves there!
Stop, in the sultan's name!

(*Running upon them furiously, and lifting his scimitar over the head of* Petronius, *who immediately discovers himself.*)

Pet. (*discovering himself.*) Crush not a worm, my lord.

Ma. A worm indeed! What treason brings ye here,
Skulking, thus muffled up in dark disguise?
Have I not warn'd ye both that ye do live
Beneath mine iron power in strictest faultlessness?
For that when ye are found but to transgress
The galling limits of imposed duty,
Even a hair's breadth, there abideth you
A recompense more dreadful than torn slaves,
Writhing in horrid ecstasy, e'er knew.
Beware: ye have no power to serve me now,
And unsuccessful traitors are most hateful.

Pet. It is, great Mahomet, to make amends
For unsuccessful services, that here
Thou find'st us, on our way within the city
To gain for thee some useful information
Against to-morrow's push. Still in our power
Some little aid remains.

Ma. If thou say'st true, return to me again,
Leading thy beauteous daughter in thy hand,
Ere two hours pass, who shall within my tent
A pledge remain for thy suspicious faith
Until the city's ta'en.—Begone, I charge you,
And answer not again.

[EXEUNT Petronius *and* Marthon.

Are all mine orders issued for the morrow?
To each respective officer assign'd
His task and station? and my rearward troops,
Mine axe and cord-men, they are not forgotten?

Osmir. No, please your highness, nothing is forgotten.
And by the early dawn——(*A mixture of confused distant sounds heard from the city.*)

Ma. What sounds are these?

Osmir. Hast thou forgot we are so near the city?
It is the murm'ring night-sounds of her streets,
Which the soft breeze wafts to thine ear, thus softly
Mix'd with the chafings of the distant waves.

Ma. (*eagerly.*) And let me listen too! I love the sound!
Like the last whispers of a dying enemy
It comes to my pleas'd ear. (*Listening.*)
Spent art thou, proud imperial queen of nations,
And thy last accents are upon the wind.
Thou hast but one voice more to utter; one
Loud, frantic, terrible, and then art thou
Amongst the nations heard no more. List! list!
I like it well! the lion hears afar
Th' approaching prey, and shakes his bristling mane,
And lashes with his tail his tawny sides,
And so hear I this city's nightly sound.

Osmir. It is indeed a rich and noble conquest
Which heaven unto its favour'd warrior gives.

Ma. Yes, Osmir; I shall wear a conqu'ror's name,
And other ages shall of Mah'met speak,
When these dumb slaves are crumbling in the dust.
But now the night wears on, and with the dawn
Must the grand work begin.
Yet one thing still remains; I must remind thee
That to my gen'ral orders this be added:—
Silent shall be the march: nor drum, nor trump,
Nor clash of arms, shall to the watchful foe
Our near approach betray: silent and soft,
As the pard's velvet foot on Libya's sands,
Slow stealing with crouch'd shoulders on her prey.

Osmir. I have already given the strictest orders.

Ma. Then all is well: go where thy duty calls.
In the mean while I'll snatch an hour of rest,
And dream, perhaps, that lovely Grecian dames,
Even with a crowned beauty in their band,
Are lowly bent to kiss my purple feet.

(*A distant bell heard from the city.*)

What deep and distant bell is this which sounds.
So solemnly on the still air of night?

Osmir. It comes from St. Sophia's lofty dome,
Where Constantine, with his small band of friends,
As I have learnt, should at this hour assemble,
To join together in religious rites
Of solemn preparation for to-morrow,
Which they regard as their last day of life,
And this as their last act of social brotherhood.

Ma. Brave men! do they so meet? (*Pausing.*)
But it must be.

Why should it move me? Heaven decrees their doom:
I act by high commission, tho' for instruments
I have but these dumb slaves. [Exeunt.

Scene II.—A pillared aisle or open space in the church of St. Sophia, with other parts of the church seen in perspective. The great bell heard.

Enter Heugho, met by an inferior Priest.

Priest. Thou com'st before thy master and his friends:
How far are they behind?

Heu. Not many paces.

(*Bell sounds again.*)

Priest. Werefore did'st thou start?

Heu. It smote mine ear most strange and dolefully.
Is there soul in its sound which sadly says,
It is the last bell that shall Christians warn
To holy rites within these fated walls?
How many hundred years this sacred pavement
Has with the tread of Christian feet been worn!
And now———Heaven's will be done!

Priest. So must we say, if that our turn be come.
We are a wicked and luxurious race,
And we have pull'd this ruin on our heads.

Heu. But there are those who needs must fall beneath it,
Whose noble worth deserv'd a better fate.

Priest. Think ye the grand assault will be so soon?

Heu. 'Tis so believ'd: and see where now they come,
In gen'rous love and brotherhood united,
Who shall, perhaps, no more see evening's close,
Or under social roof of living men
E'er meet again.

Priest. Nay, do not weep, good Heugho;
For in that blessed place they shall be join'd
Where great and good men meet.—But I must haste
To give my brethren notice. [Exit.

Enter Constantine, with Othus, Rodrigo, Justiniani, and other of his friends, who walk with solemn steps and bareheaded towards the front of the stage, the great bell sounding for the last time as they advance. Constantine then stops, and stretching out his arm as if he wished to speak, they all gather respectfully round him.

Constan. My friends, there greatly presses on my heart
Somewhat I've much desir'd to say to you,
If a full heart will grant me so much voice.

Othus. Then speak it, royal sire, we all attend
With ears of love and most profound respect.

Constan. Thus station'd on a dark and awful verge,
In company with you, my noble friends,
I have desired, in this solemn act,
To make my peace with God. But, on my soul,
If any unforgiven wrong to man
Yet rests, how shall I lift my hands to him
Who has made all men, and who cares for all,
As children of one grand and wond'rous house,
Wherein the mightiest monarch of the earth
Holds but a little nook?
I have been one, plac'd on a giddy height
Of seeming greatness, therefore liable,
In nature's poor infirmity, to acts
Of blind and foolish pride. I have been one
In much real feebleness, upheld, defended,
By voluntary aid and gen'rous zeal
Of valiant strangers owing me no service,
And therefore liable, in the mind's weakness,
Its saddest weakness, to ungrateful thoughts
Tinctur'd with jealousy. If towards you,
My noble friends, I have contracted guilt,
I trust—I know—I beg—what shall I say?
Your gen'rous hearts to all your deeds of love
Will add a last forgiveness.

Othus. O no, most royal Constantine! to us
And to all men thou'st ever worthy been,
Noble and gracious; pardon at our hands
Thou needest none.

Omnes. O no, thou needest none!
As we to thee have faithful followers been,
Thou'st ever been to us a gen'rous lord.

Constan. Your love would make it so: would that, indeed,
A voice within me seal'd its fair report!
Alas! it doth not; therefore now indulge me.
If there be one amongst you, unto whom,
With dark forbidding brow, in a stern moment,
I've given ungen'rous pain; one whose kind service,
I have with foolish and capricious humours,
More irksome made; one whose frank openness
Of manly love, offer'd to me as man
In gen'rous confidence, with heartless pride
I coldly have repell'd; yea, if there be
One of you all that ever from my presence
I have with sadden'd heart unkindly sent,
I here, in meek repentance, of him crave
A brother's hand, in token of forgiveness;
And be it in true charity stretch'd forth,
As to a man of much infirmity,
Who has with many trials been beset,
Wounding oft-times in bitterness of soul
The love he should have honour'd.
What! is there none that will to me hold out
The palm of charity?
Then I'll embrace ye all, and, with eas'd heart,
Believe myself forgiven. (*Embracing them all as they crowd affectionately to him and coming last to* Rodrigo.)
And thou, my bold Rodrigo, who canst brave
The tempests when they rage, and onward bear,
With the opposed strength of towering navies
Black'ning before thee, com'st thou to my breast
In soft forgiving love? I know thou dost.

Rod. Ay, in that love that would forgive to thee

The sum of all thy sins, tho' multiplied
Ten thousand thousand fold.—
That would do in thy service—O cursed limit!
That there should be what to man's sinew'd strength,
In all the burning zeal of righteous boldness,
Impossible is.
(*Clenching his hands vehemently.*)

Othus. (*to* Rodrigo) Cease! dost thou not respect these holy walls?

Rod. I do respect them, Othus; ne'er a head,
Shorn to the scalp, doth bow itself more humbly
Before heaven's throne than mine, albeit, in truth
My words unseemly are.

Constan. Come to my heart, my friend! He reigns above
Who will forgive us both. (*Embraces* Rodrigo, *and then observing* Heugho, *who has stood behind, not presuming to approach him with the rest.*)
But there is one who stands from me aloof
With modest backwardness, unto whose charity
I must be debtor also. Worthy Heugho,
Since earliest youth I from thy friendly hand
Have daily kindly offices receiv'd,
Proffer'd with love, exceeding far all duty
Belonging to thy state; yet, ne'ertheless,
I once, in a most vile and fretful mood,
Vex'd with cross things, thine honour'd age forgot.

Heu. Oh, say not so, my dear and royal master.
It breaks my heart that you should still remember.

Constan. Well, well, be not thus mov'd my worthy Heugho,
I know I am forgiv'n; but lay thy hand,
Thine aged hand, upon thy master's head,
And give him a last blessing. Thou art now
Like to an ancient father with us grown,
And my heart says that it will do me good.
(*Bowing his head, whilst* Heugho, *lifting up his aged hands over him, is unable to speak, but bursts into tears, and falls upon his master's neck. The band of friends close round and conceal them: afterwards they open to make way, and* Constantine *comes forward with a firm enlightened countenance.*)
And now, my noble friends, it pleases me
To think we all are knit in holy bands
Of fellowship; prepar'd, in virtue's strength,
Nobly to fight on earth, or meet in heaven.

Othus. Yes, Constantine, we to each other will
True brothers prove, and to our noble chief
Devoted followers, whate'er betide.
What say ye, valiant friends?

Omnes. All, all of us!

Constan. I know you will, full well I know you will.
Oh, that in earth it had been granted me
Your gen'rous love to've recompens'd! alas!
Ye can but share with me———

Omnes. No other recompense,
But sharing fates with thee, our noble chief,
Do we desire, and on thy royal hand
Here will we seal it.

Constan. (*eagerly preventing them as they are about to kneel and kiss his hands.*) Forbear! forbear! within these sacred walls
Bend before worthless man the humble knee!
Fye, let no such shame be!
Am I your chief? then be it shewn in this,
That to the mighty Majesty of heaven
I humbly bow, more lowly than ye all,
And do, on your behalf, devoutly beg
The blessing of our Master and our Sire.
(*Kneeling and bowing his head very low to the ground, then rising afterwards with dignified solemnity.*)
Now to those sacred rites of our blest faith,
In which the humble soul ennobled bows,
In mem'ry of the dearest brothership
That ever honour'd man, I lead you on,
My noble brothers. (Exeunt Constantine, *&c. by another aisle, which may be supposed to lead to the altar of the church, whilst several priests are seen at a distance in their robes, as if waiting to receive them.*)

Scene III.—A hall, or anti-room in the imperial palace.

Enter Petronius and Marthon disguised.

Pet. So far hath this well-counterfeited signet,
And this disguise, befriended us: here stop:
Whilst Constantine and his mad band are absent
On their religious ceremony, here
We will remain conceal'd until that Ella,
Returning, (for 'tis near her wonted time,
As they have told us) from Valeria's chamber,
Shall give us fair occasion.—Rouse thee, Marthon;
Thou seem'st like one bereaved of all sense;
What is the matter with thee?

Mar. Nothing; but thus to pass with culprit feet
Beneath the shade of night, these well-known courts
Which I so oft have trod in front of day,
With the firm footsteps of an honest man,
Doth make me———

Pet. Fye! thou art become a fool.
Shake off such weakness: we're compell'd to this.
We shall beneath the sultan's iron sway,
Disgrac'd from the late failure of our plots,
Live like lash'd slaves, if the bewitching beauty
Of my young Ella come not to our aid
To bend his rugged nature. Strong in her,
We shall not merely safe protection find,
But highest favour and authority;
And tho' by stealth I needs must bear her hence.

Being my daughter, I, in nature's right ——

Mar. Hush! now I hear a lightly-sounding step.
Draw back a little space. (*They step aside, whilst* Ella *enters, and walks across the stage.*)

Pet. (*in a half voice, stealing softly up to her.*) Ella!

Ella. (*starting.*) What voice is that which names me!

Pet. Ella!

Ella. O! 'tis the sound that I most dread to hear!

Pet. Say'st thou so, Ella, of thy father's voice?
Have my misfortunes, with the world's fair favour,
Depriv'd me also of my only child?

Ella. No, no! they have not: had misfortune only
Cast its dark shade upon thee, I had lov'd thee
And cherish'd thee in a lone desert, father.
But—but thou art———

Pet. Ha! wherefore dost thou pause!
What would'st thou say? what is there in thy mind?

Ella. Thoughts which I will not utter.—Oh, depart!
Thou'rt not in safety. All men do condemn thee.
Thou'rt not come for good.—Oh, fly from hence!
Ruin, and shame, and death abide thee here:
Oh, fly, my wretched father.

Pet. Yes, I will fly, but thou shalt go with me;
If not, I will remain and meet my fate.

Ella. Good heaven forbid! thou'lt drive me to distraction.
O misery! (*wringing her hands in great distress, whilst* Marthon *advances to* Petronius *with supplicating look.*)

Pet. Away! thou art a fool: we must be firm. (*To* Marthon.)
Wring not thy hands thus wildly, simple maid:
Thou goest to be with me no wand'ring outlaw,
But one in splendour greater than a queen:
The favour'd mistress of the mighty sultan. (*To* Ella.)
(Ella *gives a loud shriek, and struggles to get from him.*)

Enter Rodrigo.

Rod. Audacious villain! quit thy cursed hold,
Or take death for thy pains.
Ha! thou shrink'st back, and muffl'est up thy face.
Say who thou art, or thro' thy villain's heart
I'll thrust this rapier.

Ella. (*pulling* Rodrigo *back.*) Hold, I do beseech thee!
For pity, hold! it is my wretched father.

Rod. Wretched indeed!

Ella. Ay, therefore pity him.
Let him escape: he hath done me no harm.
He is here as a fox in his last wiles,
Who shelter seeks within the very kennel
O' the rous'd pack: Oh, have some pity on him!
He is my father.

Rod. Sweet Ella, hang not thus upon mine arm:
It hath no power to strike whom thou call'st father,
Shame as he is unto that honour'd name.
But there are ties upon me, gentle maid:
The safety and the interests of Constantine
I am bound to defend: and shall a traitor——

Ella. Oh! oh!

Rod. Fear not: our royal master is return'd
From blessed rites of holiest charity
With meekly chasten'd soul: whate'er his crimes
He is in safety—safety as assured
As thine own harmless self.

Enter Constantine.

Constan. (*to* Rodrigo.) Thou speak'st with an unwonted earnestness;
I've mark'd thy gestures; something moves thee much.
Who are these strangers? (*Turning to* Petronius *and* Marthon, *who, uncovering their faces, stand confessed before him.*)
Ha! Marthon and Petronius! What new treason
Is now on foot, that here——but judge I harshly?
Ye are, perhaps, struck with the circumstances
Of these most solemn times, repentant grown,
And if ye be in a good hour ye come;
I am myself a wean'd and pardon'd man.
Marthon, thou once wert wont to speak the truth;
What brought ye hither?

Mar. Most gracious prince, with no repentant mind
We hither came; but one of us, at least,
Shall hence depart with a heart deeply smitten.

Constan. Confess then what new treason ye devised.

Ella. No treason; none to thee most royal Constantine.
For me he came, arm'd with a parent's right,
To bear me to the haughty sultan's camp,
To live in queenly state. But, Oh protect me!
Let me remain and die with those I love
In decent maiden pride. Retain me here,
But pardon him: no treason brought him hither.

Constan. Petronius, has thy daughter told me true?
Was this thine errand?

Pet. (*approaching* Constantine.) Yes, most gracious prince.

Constan. Off then, disgrace to nature and to manhood!

Would'st thou to shameful and degrading slavery
Betray thy virtuous child? Say thou cam'st hither
To thrust i' the dark thy dagger thro' my heart,
And I will call the sinless.

Pet. Wherefore this stern and bitter execration?
I came to place her but a few hours sooner,
Sav'd from th' approaching storm, where your high dames,
Yea, with their royal mistress at their head,
Full shortly shall be placed.

Constan. Detested wretch! what fiend has whisper'd to thee
Such hideous thoughts? man durst not utter them.

Pet. Man might, at least, surveying the position
And aspect of these times, in his own mind
This plain and shrewd conjecture form. But not
On such loose bottom do I ground my words;
Mah'met himself hath sworn that your Valeria
Shall at the head of his most favour'd wives—

Constan. Hold thy detested tongue! for one word more
Is instant death. Tempt me not with these hands,
Which hath the symbols touch'd of blessed peace,
To do a horrible act.

Pet. I but repeat that which the sultan hath
In public said.

Constan. Forbear! forbear! I tell thee. (*Wrenching his sword, scabbard and all, from his side, and tossing it from him.*)
There! there! Rodrigo: cast it from my reach:
Let not a weapon be within my grasp,
Or I shall be accursed. (*After a violent struggle of passion.*)
I dare speak to him now.—Ho! guards without!

Ella. Oh, mercy! mercy!

Enter GUARDS.

Constan. (*to* Guards.) Take these two men, Petronius and his friend,
And through the city to our utmost post
Conduct them safely: there, in perfect liberty,
Permit them to depart where'er they list.
(*To* Petronius.) Now, I'm revenged upon thee: get thee hence,
And utter not a word.—Go thou, Rodrigo,
And with the gentle Ella in thy hand,
Conduct them to the palace gate. Hence quickly!

Mar. Nay, let Petronius go: I will remain,
And with the meanest soldier on your walls
Spend my last blood, if a true penitent——

Constan. (*waving him off impatiently.*) Well, be it as thou wilt: but hence and leave me!

Rod. (*to* Ella, *as he leads her out.*) Did I not tell thee he was safe, my Ella?

[EXEUNT *all but* Constantine, *who, after walking up and down for some time in a perturbed manner, starts at the sound of* Valeria's *voice without.*)

Constan. Ha! here she comes! alas! how shall I now
Look on her face, and hear her voice of love!
It is distraction!

Enter VALERIA.

Val. My Constantine, art thou so long return'd,
And yet to me no kindly summons sent,
Long as I've watch'd for it?—What is the matter?
Thy brow is dark: these are disturbed looks:
What is the matter?

Constan. Nothing, nothing.
I am, thou know'st, with many cares perplex'd.
Follow me to thine own apartment; here
I cannot speak to thee.

Val. (*aside, looking eagerly at him, as they go out.*) What may this be?

[EXEUNT.

SCENE IV.—VALERIA'S APARTMENT.

Enter CONSTANTINE, followed by VALERIA, who remain silent for some time, she looking anxiously with wistful expectation.

Val. Now we are here, my lord, in the still privacy
Of this my inmost bower; but thou art silent. (*Pauses, and he is still silent.*)
There is a look of sadness on thy face
Of disturb'd wretchedness, that never yet,
Ev'n in thy darkest hours, I've seen thee wear:
Why art thou thus?

Constan. And dost thou ask? I've been, in deep humility,
Making a sinner's peace with God and man,
And now——and now——(*His voice faltering.*)

Val. What would you say, my lord?

Constan. And now I am with thee.

Val. And art thou sad for this? hast thou not still,
Loose from all shackles of imposed state,
Been with me in thine hours of joy or grief,
Like a way-faring man, who, sitting down
On the green bank, his cumb'rous vestment opens
To the soft breeze?

Constan. Yes, my Valeria; I have been with thee
As with a true yoke heart, so strong in love
That ev'n the thought which scudded o'er my mind
With culprit's speed from shameful conscious-

Was not from thee conceal'd
But now the hour is come, when ev'n with thee
I must perform a task—a task of pain.

Val. Speak; what mean'st thou?

Constan. All have, ev'n in the dearest intercourse
Of heart with heart, in some untoward moment
Transgressors been, and prov'd the cause of pain
Where most they should have banish'd it: and all,
In quitting earthly ties, do anxiously
Desire, in the true blessing of forgiveness,
To part with those whom they have held most dear.
Now dost thou understand me? (*Holding out both his hands to her.*)

Val. I do! I do! thou hast my dearest blessing.
The dearest thoughts and worship of my heart.
But oh! what dost thou say?—part!—how, my Constantine!
Where dost thou go? thou dost not leave the city?

Constan. No, love, but on its wall I go ere long,—
For in a little hour the day will break
Which must its fate decide,—that part to act,
Which, before God and man, in honest pride,
I'm call'd on to perform.

Val. But from those walls victorious thou'lt return.

(Constantine *smiles sorrowfully.*)

Nay, but thou shalt return: high Heav'n decrees it;
Virtue, and every good and blessed thing
Have made it sure. Ev'n in a faith as strong
As at this moment I do hold to this,
Methinks, upon the chaf'd and tossing waves
Of the wild deep I could thus firmly tread,
Nor wet my sandal's thong.
(*Walking across the stage with firm steps of stately confidence, and then going up to him with an encouraging smile.*)
Be thou assur'd!
I know it shall be so. A mystic sage,
Whom I, unknown to thee, have visited—
Pardon this weakness of thine anxious wife—
Darting his eye on forms of woven air,
Saw thee in combat with a Turkish champion,
And saw the crescent fall.

Constan. And may'st thou not believe, that ere they close
Their mortal warfare, many a boastful Turk
Beneath these arms shall fall?

Val. Ay, but on surer words I rest my faith!
For I did bid him onward cast his eye
Into time's reach, and say, who of this city,
After the course of twelve revolving moons,
Should be the sov'reign lord; and he replied,
In plain and simple words, thy lord and husband.

Constan. And nam'd he Constantine?

Val. What other name but that of Constantine
Could to these appellations be conjoin'd?
Thou turnest from me with perturbed looks:
Thou shalt not turn away: tell me! O, tell me!
What sudden thought is this that troubles thee?
(*Catching hold of him eagerly as he turns from her.*)

Constan. Ask not; Oh, do not ask! 'tis pass'd already
As shoots a glaring meteor 'thwart the night,
Frightful but hasty.

Val. Thou must tell it me.

Constan. Distract me not.

Val. Nay, nay, but thou must tell me.
What other name but that of Constantine
Could to my lord and husband joined be?

Constan. (*sinking down upon a chair quite overcome, and covering his face with his hands as he speaks with a quick perturbed voice.*)
Mahomet! Mahomet!
(Valeria *steps back from him, holding up her hands in amazement; then he, after a pause, looking up to her with a self-upbraiding eye.*)
I have offended in this very hour
When my press'd soul sigh'd for that loving peace
Which in its earthly close the soul desires.
I have offended.

Val. Yes, thou hast offended.
All the offences thou hast ever done me
Are in this fell and cruel stroke compris'd;
And any other stroke, compared to this,
Had fall'n upon me lightly.

Constan. It was a thought that hasted fast away,
And came unbidden. (*Going up to her penitently.*)

Val. (*turning away in anger,*) There is no thought doth ever cross the mind
Till some preceding kindred sentiment
Hath made a path-way for it.

Constan. Yes, my Valeria, thou indeed say'st true;
But turn not from me angrily. My mind,
Ere now, consider'd has the character,
The faith, the power of Mahomet.—Frown not.—
Valeria thou art fair.—Nay, do not frown!

Val. What dost thou say! hast thou until this moment
Reserv'd for me this base degrading——No:
Torn and defaced by every hated form
Of outward grace! it is our curse, our shame!
(*Tearing her hair violently.*)

Constan O be not thus!—forgive a hasty thought!
Think how a doating husband is distracted,
Who knows too well a lawless victor's power.

Val. What is his power! it naught regardeth me.

Constan. Alas! the frowns of a detesting bride
Deter him not!

Val. (*smiling contemptuously.*) But will he wed the dead?

Constan. (*starting.*) What say'st thou? Oh, what meaning is there here!
Yes, yes! I know it all! but it is dreadful:
It makes the cold chill o'er my limbs to creep:
It is not well: it is not holy. No!
O no, my noble love, mine honour'd love!
Give to thy fallen lord all that the soul
To widow'd love may give, but oh stop there?
Heav'n will protect thee in the hour of need;
And for the rest, erase it from thy thoughts,
Give it no being there.

Val. It hath no being there. Heav'n will protect me:
And he who thinks me helpless thinks me mean.

Constan. I think thee all that e'er was tenanted
Of noblest worth in loveliest female form:
By nature excellent, defective only
In this, that fortune has thy virtues link'd
To the vex'd spirit of a ruin'd man,
Who in his hours of anguish has not priz'd them
As did become their worth.

Val. (*rushing into his arms.*) No, thou hast priz'd them,
In thy blind love, far, far beyond their worth.
My uncurb'd passions have, alas! too oft
Vexation added to that burden'd heart
I should have cheer'd and lighten'd: on my head
Rests all the blame that e'er between us pass'd,
And I alone have need to be forgiven.

(*They weep on one another's necks without speaking, when an alarm bell is heard at a distance, and* Constantine *breaks suddenly from her.*)

Constan. It is the 'larum of my farther watch.

Val. I scarcely heard it, art thou sure of it?

(*A second alarm bell heard nearer.*)

Constan. And hark! a nearer tower repeats the sound.
The enemy's in motion.—I must arm,
And instantly.

Val. Then let me be with thee till the last moment.
I have a holy relick of great power;
It is, I trust, worth all thine arms beside;
And from this hand of love thou shalt receive it.

Constan. (*smiling sorrowfully.*) Thanks, sweet Valeria! from thy hand of love
I will with love receive whate'er thou wilt.

(*A third alarm bell is heard still louder, and enter Attendants in haste.*)

Yes, yes, I heard it; go, prepare mine arms.
[*To Attendants, and* Exeunt.

Scene V.—a spacious hall in the palace.

Enter Rodrigo, with Ella hanging fondly upon him, and continue their way as if intending to pass through it, when a trumpet sounds without, and they stop short.

Rod. It is the sound that summons us to meet:
There is no farther grace: therefore, sweet Ella,
My pretty Ella, my good loving Ella,
My gentle little one that hang'st upon me
With such fond hold, in good sooth we must part,
Here bid Heav'n bless me, and no farther go.

Ella. Must it be so? I will bid Heaven bless thee,
And all good saints watch o'er thy precious life;
And they will bless and guard thee in the hour
Of fearful death. In this I have true faith;
But, on the very brink, to hold thee thus
Clasp'd in my grasp, and think how soon—Alas!
From many points will fly the whizzing balls,
And showering darts, and jav'lins sent afar,
Aim'd by fell strength; wilt thou escape all this?

Rod. Fear not, sweet Ella! whizzing balls there be
That, in midway, are from their course declin'd
By the poor orphan's little lisped prayer;
And there be arrows that are turn'd aside,
In their swift flight, by the soft sighs of love,
Unheard of earthly ears. This is a creed,
In the good faith of which poor seamen climb
Their rocking masts, in the full roar of battle,
And we'll believe it.

Ella. It is a blessed one: I would believe it.

Rod. Yes, we'll believe it. Whilst our battle roars,
Thou'l think of me in thy lone distant tower,
And be to me a gallant armed mate,
With prayers and wishes striving powerfully.
Give me thy hand: we will not weep and wail:
We will part cheerfully.—God bless thee, Ella!
Nay, hang not on me thus.
Thou lov'st a brave man: be thou valiant then,
As suits a brave man's love.

Ella. O no! I've fondly fix'd myself upon thee,
Most worthless and unsuited to thy worth.
Like a poor weed on some proud turret's brow,
I wave, and nod, and kiss the air around thee,
But cannot be like thee.

Rod. Heav'n bless thee, little flower! I prize thee more
Than all the pride of female stateliness.

Ella. Dost thou? then I am happy: I am proud:
I will not wish me other than I am.

Rod. Ah, if we part not instantly, my Ella,
I feel in faith, rude as my nature is,
I soon shall be like thee!—My friends approach:
Let us not meet their gaze—It must be so—
Sweet one, farewell!—Wilt thou still cling to me?

Ella. O no, I go: they shall not see thee weep,

Tho' I do bless thee for it.

Rod. (*leading her hastily back to the door by which they entered.*) Well then, brave lass, upon thy lovely head
Heaven's favour rest!—Nay, do not speak to me.

(*Preventing her as she is endeavouring to speak.*)

Farewell! farewell! [Exit Ella, *and he returns to the front of the stage, where he stands musing sorrowfully; when enters to him* Justiniani, *and, going up to him, touches his shoulder.*)

What dost thou want? (*Turning angrily.*)

Jus. Thou'rt thoughtful.

Rod. No, I think as others do
With such day's work before them, in good truth,
Not passing merrily.

Jus. From the high tower I've seen th' approaching foe:
It seems a dark and strangely-mixed mass
Of life, wide moving in the misty light
Of early dawn.—I've fought in many a field,
As valiant men and armed warriors fight,
But such a strange assemblage of new modes
Of mingled war as we this day must face,
I never yet encounter'd.

Rod. Well, we shall know the scent and flavour of it
When we have tasted it.

Jus. We shall be smother'd up with the mean press
Of worthless matter, as a noble steed,
Beneath the falling rafters of his shed
Ignobly perishes.

Rod. Fear not, proud soul; we shall have men to fight,
And room enough in some nook of the breach
To grapple with them too.

Jus. Good fortune ever shone on thee, Rodrigo:
Thou still hast been a bold careering bark,
Outriding ev'ry storm. If thou shouldst e'er
Again return to our dear native land,
Tell to my countrymen whate'er thou know'st
Pertaining to my fate this fateful day:
Let me not be forgotten.

Rod. I will, my friend: but better fate than thine
I look not for, tho' still I bear myself
As one assur'd of good.—Thou'rt dark and gloomy—
Does aught rest on thy mind?

Jus. (*striding away from him gloomily.*)
No, nothing, nothing!

(*A trumpet sounds without.*)

Rod. Ay, hark, another of our gallant band
Has join'd us with his followers.

(*Another trumpet sounds.*)

And now another: are they all assembled?

Enter Othus, and several of the imperial Friends.

Othus. On their high wooden turrets, and huge beams
Of warlike engines, rais'd aloft in air,
Gleams the first light of this high-fated day;
And, wide expanded, thro' the farther mists
Moves the dark Turkish host.
Thou'rt a tried soul, Rodrigo, I but new
To such tremendous, strange expectancy:
Now is the hour when the soul knows itself.

(*Rising on tiptoe with a conscious smile.*)

Rod. Ay, Othus, thou dost wear the countenance
Of a true man: give me thine honest hand.
Are all our friends assembled?

(*Trumpet sounds.*)

Othus. This says they are; and here comes, last of all,
Our northern friends.

Enter more of the Friends.

Now we are all assembled. Constantine,
He also comes; and sadly by his side,
In mournful dignity, moves his high dame,
Proudly contending with her woman's heart.

Enter Constantine and Valeria, attended.

Con. (*returning the general salute of the chiefs.*) Good morrow, noble brothers and brave leaders:
Are we all here conven'd?

Othus. Yes, our great chief and brother: of your friends
There lacks not one.

Constan. Then to their love, so help me, Mighty power,
Who hold'st within thy grasp the souls of men!
Neither shall we be lacking——Now, Valeria.

(*Drawing himself up with a proud but tender smile, as if to encourage her to behave nobly.*)

Val. I understand that smile.
Here with thy gen'rous friends, whose love to thee
Most dearly celled in my heart I wear,
And unto whom I have desired much,
Before we part, these grateful thanks to pay—

(*Making grateful obeisance to the chiefs.*)

Here to those noble friends, and to God's keeping,
I leave thee.——Yet, be it permitted me—
For that thy noble head and lib'ral brow
Have ever cheer'd me as my star of day,
Blessings and blessings let me pour upon them!

(*Putting her hand upon his head fervently and kissing his forehead.*)

For that thy gen'rous breast has been the hold
Of all my treasur'd wishes and dear thoughts,
This fond embrace. (*Embracing him.*)
Yea, and for that thou art
My sire, and sov'reign, and most honour'd lord,
This humble homage of my heart receive.

(*Kneeling and kissing his hand.*)

Constan. (*raising and embracing her with great emotion.*) No more, my dearest and most noble love!
Spare me, O spare me! Heaven be thy protection!
Farewell!

Val. Farewell!

(Valeria *is led off by her Attendants, whilst* Constantine *continues looking sadly after her for some time, then turning to his friends, who gather about him, without saying a word, they go all off the stage together in profound silence.)*

ACT V.

SCENE I.—AN OPEN SPACE NEAR THE WALLS OF THE CITY, WITH HALF-RUIN'D HOUSES ON EACH SIDE, AND A ROW OF ARCHED PILLARS THROWN ACROSS THE MIDDLE OF THE STAGE, AS IF IT WERE THE REMAINS OF SOME RUINED PUBLIC BUILDING: THROUGH WHICH IS SEEN, IN THE BACK-GROUND, A BREACH IN THE WALLS, AND THE CONFUSED FIGHTING OF THE BESIEGED, ENVELOPED IN CLOUDS OF SMOKE AND DUST.

The noise of artillery, the battering of engines, and the cries of the combatants heard as the curtain draws up, and many people discovered on the front of the stage, running about in great hurry and confusion, and some mounted upon the roofs of the houses overlooking the battle.

Voice (*calling from the wall.*) See! see! how, cluster'd on each other's backs,
They mount like swarming bees, or locusts link'd
In bolt'ring heaps! Pour fire upon their head!
Second Voice. Cast down huge beams upon them!
Third Voice. Hurl down the loosen'd fragments of our wall!
Fourth Voice. Ho! more help here! more stones! more beams! more fire!
Weapons are useless now.
First Voice. See how that giant Turk, like an arch fiend,
Climbs on yon living mountain of curv'd backs!
He gains the wall! O hurl him headlong down!
He is hurl'd down!
(*A great shout from the besieged*)
Second Voice. Send to the emperor or to Rodrigo:
They on their diff'rent stations hold it bravely;
This is the weakest point. Ho! send for aid!
[EXEUNT *several soldiers from the walls as if running for succour. The noise of artillery, &c. is heard as before, and afterwards a loud crash as of some building falling.*

Enter many people in great terror from the walls running off by the front of the stage different ways, and enter at the same time, CONSTANTINE and some of his friends, who stop them.

Constan. Turn, turn! O turn, my friends! another push!
Let us still stop the breach, or fall like men.

Enter JUSTINIANI from the walls with a hasty and disordered step, pale and writhing with pain.

Merciful Heav'n! do mine eyes serve me truly?
Justiniani, with pale haggard face,
Retiring from his post!
Where are you going, chief?
(*Stopping him sternly.*)
Jus. Where nature, urg'd beyond the pith of nature,
Compels me. Midst yon streams of liquid fires,
And hurling ruins and o'erwhelming mass
Of things unknown, unseen, uncalculable,
All arms and occupation of a soldier
Are lost and turn'd to naught: man's strength is naught:
The fangs of hell are in my new-torn flesh;
I must on for a space and breathe fresh air.
Constan. Go to! this moment is the quiv'ring ridge
That stands between our success or our ruin:—
The sight of thy turn'd back from their screw'd pitch
Will turn more hearts than all the pressing foe:
Thou must not go.
Jus. I am a mortal man:
The fangs of fiends are in my new-torn flesh:
Nature compels me, and I must have succour.
[EXIT *hastily, and writhing with pain.*
Constan. Alas! God pity him! one luckless moment
Of weakness and of anguish bring to him
A wound that cannot be up-bound. Poor nature! (*Enter many fugitives from the walls.*)
Turn, turn, O soldiers! let not this shame be.
(*To the fugitives.*)
(*As he is endeavouring with his friends to rally them and push forward, a terrible shout is heard, and enter a great crowd of fugitives from the walls.*)
What shout was that?
Fugitive. The Turks have gain'd the breach, and thro' it pour
Like an o'erboiling flood.
Constan. Then is the city lost—the dark hour come—
And as an emperor my task is clos'd.
God's will be done! (*Throwing away the imperial purple.*)
Now is there left for me these sinew'd arms,
And this good sword, the wherewithal to earn
A noble soldier's death.
Come on with me who will, and share the fate
Of a brave comrade.
A Fugitive. (*joined by several others.*) Yes, we'll share thy fate,
Comrade or sov'reign, noble Constantine!
We will die by thy side.

[Exit Constantine, *followed by his friends and several of the fugitives, and passing through the pillars to the back-ground, rushes amidst the confusion of the fight. A terrible noise of arms, &c. and presently one of the pillars in the middle of the stage falling down, a wider view of the battle is opened, and the Turks are seen rushing through the breach, and bearing every thing before them.*

Re-enter Constantine wounded, but still fighting bravely, though oppressed with numbers, and falls down near the front of the stage, the enemy passing on and leave him.

Constan. Am I then left!
Oh is the rene'er a Christian soldier near me
That will cut off my head? Ho! thou Turk there! (*To a Turk who is going to pass him.*)

Turk. Art thou not dead?

Constan. No, one half of me, Turk, is living still, (*Raising himself half up from the ground.*)
And still a match for thee.

Turk. Ha! say'st thou so? we'll put it to the proof.
Yet thou'rt a brave man, tho' thou art a Greek,
I would far rather let thee die in peace.

Constan. No, no! have at thee! (*pushing at the Turk with his sword, who turning against him as he is half raised from the ground, thrusts him through the body.*)
I thank thee, friendly foe-man, this will do:
Thou hast done me good service.

Turk. And thou art welcome to it. Fare thee well!
A good death to thee! for thou art no Greek. [Exit.

Constan. Ay, this will do: this hath the true stern gripe
Of potent speedy death. My task is closed.
I now put off these weeds of flesh and blood,
And, thanks be unto Him who cloth'd me in them!
Untarnish'd with disgrace. What cometh after
Full surely cometh well. 'Tis a dark pass.—
(*Catching at a dropt garment that has been left by some of the fugitives on the ground near him.*)
Here is a ready shrowd to wrap my head:
This death deals shrewdly with me. (*Covers his face and dies, after a considerable struggle.*)

Enter Rodrigo, Othus, and Marthon, with two or three of their followers, fighting bravely with a party of Turks, whom they beat off the stage.

Othus. Now for a space those ruffians stand aloof:
This is a pause that calls upon the mind:
What shall we do?

Rod. What do men do, when they together stand,
On the last perch of the swift-sinking wreck?
Do they not bravely give their parting cheer,
And make their last voice loud and boldly sound
Amidst the hollow roarings of the storm?
Ev'n so will we: we'll bear our manhood up
To the last push.

Othus. Thou speakest well, brave seaman: thou dost speak
What the heart owns: we will do even so.
But Oh, that our brave leader now were near us,
Living or dead! Doth no one know his fate?
I thought by him t' have died.

First Follower. What corpse is this so cover'd? on its sandal
It wears th' imperial bird in fretted gold.

Othus. Then it is he! (*Tearing off the covering eagerly from the head of* Constantine.)
O thou brave heart! thou hast got to thy rest
With honour: Heav'n be praised that thou hast!
Here round thee our last gathering point shall be:
Here will we fight, nor shall thy honour'd body
Suffer, whilst one of us has strength to fight,
The slightest insult.

Rod. Ay, they shall hack us into raven's meat,
Ere on his gallant corpse there be impress'd
One touch of impious hands! (*a loud noise of shrieking and terror heard without.*)

Othus. Hear the wild cries of terror and despair,
Mix'd with the din of carnage! Now those cowards,
Who let this brave man all unaided perish,
Are suff'ring that which, in his fellest pinch,
The valiant never suffers.
But see, the enemy again returns
With doubled fury!

Rod. Come they? then we are ready for them. Yonder
Stands a small walled dome, within whose portal
We for a time may face ten thousand foes:
There will we take our stand, and there will we
Do our last deeds of men. Come on, brave mates!
Take up our honour'd treasure; and, so burden'd,
He that doth grapple with us had as lief
Pull from the lion's hug his bosom'd whelp.
The followers take up the body, and Othus *and* Rodrigo *retire, defending it bravely from a party of Turks, who enter and fall upon them as they are bearing it off.*)

Scene II.—An apartment in one of the towers of the palace.

Enter Valeria in great alarm, followed by Lucia and Attendants.

Val. Louder and louder still the dreadful sound
Of battle swells. Is it not nearer us?
This lofty tower the widest view commands;
Open that lattice quickly. (*Pointing to a window which* Lucia *opens, and then, rushing on eagerly to look, shrinks back again.*)
I pray thee look thyself, mine eyes are dark,
And I see nothing. Oh, what see'st thou?
Tell me whate'er it be.

Lucia. (*looking out.*) Nothing but clouds of smoke and eddying dust:
A dun and grumly darkness spreads o'er all,
From which arise those horrid sounds, but naught
Distinctive of the fight can I discern.

Val. (*after pacing backward and forward with an unequal, restless, agitated step.*) Oh, will this state of tossing agony
No termination have! Send out, I pray thee,
Another messenger.

Lucia. Indeed I have in little space of time
Sent many forth, but none return again.

Val. In little space. Oh it hath been a term
Of horrible length? such as rack'd fiends do reckon
Upon their tossing beds of surgy flames,
Told by the lashes of each burning tide
That o'er them breaks.—Hark! the quick step of one
With tidings fraught! Dost thou not hear it?

Lucia. No;
I hear it not.

Val. Still is the false coinage of my fears?
Ah! hearing, sight, and every sense is now
False and deceitful grown.—I'll sit me down,
And think no more but let the black hour pass
In still and fixed stupor o'er my head.
(*Sits down upon a low seat, and supports her bended head upon both her hands.*)

Lucia. (*listening.*) Now I do hear the sound of real feet
In haste approaching.

Val. (*starting up.*) Some one brings us tidings.
What may they be? Quick steps should bring us good.

Enter MESSENGER.

Say all thou hast to say, and say it quickly.
If it be good hold up thy blessed hand,
And I will bless the token.—No, thou dost not!
'Tis evil then.—How is it with my lord?
What dangers still encompass him?

Mes. No dangers.

Val. And dost thou say so with that terrible look?
Is he alive? Have all deserted him?

Mes. No, round his body still some brave men fight,
And will not quit him till they be as he is.

(Valeria, *uttering a loud shriek, falls back into the arms of her attendants, and is carried off, followed by* Lucia *and the* Messenger.)

SCENE III.—A HALL IN THE PALACE.

Enter a Crowd of frightened Women, and seem hurrying on to some place of greater security.

First Woman. (*stopping.*) No, we are wrong; we'll to the eastern tower,
That is the most retir'd; that last of all
Will tempt their search.

Second Woman. In the deep vaulted caverns of the palace,
Might we not for a while conceal'd remain,
Till heav'n shall send us means?

Omnes. Ay, thou art right; that is the best of all:
We'll to the vaults. (*As they are all turning and hurrying back again, enter a domestic Officer of the palace, and stops them.*)

Officer. Where do you run with such wild looks of fear?
Think ye the Turks are passing thro' the city,
Like the short visit of a summer's storm,
That you in holes and rocks may safely hide
Until it be o'erblown?

First Woman. Oh, no! we know that they are come for ever!
Yet for a little while we fain would save us
From fearful things.

Officer. I come to tell you that by Ma-h'met's orders
The cruel Turks have stopp'd their bloody work,
And peace again is in our walls.

First Woman. Say'st thou?
And art thou sure of this? and hast thou seen it?

Officer. Yes, I have seen it. Like a sudden gleam
Of fierce returning light at the storm's close,
Glancing on horrid sights of waste and sorrow,
Came the swift word of peace, and to the eye
Gave consciousness of that which the wild uproar
And dire confusion of the carnage hid.

First Woman. Alas! be there such sights within our walls?

Officer. Yes, maid, such sights of blood! such sights of nature!
In expectation of their horrid fate,
Widows, and childless parents, and 'lorn dames,
Sat by their unwept dead with fixed gaze,
In horrible stillness.
But when the voice of grace was heard aloud,
So strongly stirr'd within their roused souls
The love of life, that, even amidst those horrors,
A joy was seen—joy hateful and unlovely.
I saw an aged man rise from an heap

Of grizly dead, whereon, new murder'd, lay,
His sons and grandsons, yea, the very babe
Whose cradle he had rock'd with palsied hands,
And shake his grey locks at the sound of life,
With animation wild and horrible.
I saw a mother with her murder'd infant
Still in her arms fast lock'd, spring from the ground—
No, no! I saw it not! I saw it not!
It was a hideous fancy of my mind:
I have not seen it.
But I forget my chiefest errand here.

First Woman. And what is that?

Officer. It is to bid you tell your royal mistress,
It may, perhaps, somewhat assuage her grief,
That Othus and Rodrigo, with some followers,
The last remains of the imperial band,
Fighting, in all the strength of desperation,
Around the body of their fallen chief,
Have mov'd to gen'rous thoughts the sultan's breast;
Who has their valour honour'd with full leave,
In blessed ground, with military pomp,
Becoming his high state and valiant worth,
To lay his dear remains. This with their lives
On honourable terms he freely grants.

First Woman. And do those brave men live?

Officer. They do; but Othus soon I fear will be
With him he mourns.—Delay no more, I pray:
Inform the empress speedily of this.

First Woman. Alas! she is not in a state to hear it:
The phrenzy of her grief repels all comfort.—
But softly!—hush!—methinks I hear her voice.
She's coming hither in the restless wand'rings
Of her untamed mind.—Stand we aside,
And speak not to her yet.

Enter VALERIA with her hair dishevelled, and in all the wild disorder of violent sorrow, followed by ELLA and LUCIA, who seem endeavouring to soothe her.

Val. Forbear all words, and follow me no more.
I now am free to wander where I list;
To howl i' the desert with the midnight winds,
And fearless be amidst all fearful things.
The storm has been with me, and I am left
Torn and uprooted, and laid in the dust
With those whom after-blasts rend not again.
I am in the dark gulf where no light is.
I am on the deep bed of sunken floods,
Whose swoln and welt'ring billows rise no more
To bear the tossed wreck back to the strand.

Lucia. Oh, say not so! Heav'n doth in its good time
Send consolation to the sharpest woe.
It still in kindness sends to the tried soul
Its keenest suff'rings. So say holy men;
And therein good men trust.

Val. I hear, I hear thee! in mine ear thy voice
Sounds like the feeble night-fly's humming noise
To him, who in the warfare of vex'd sleep,
Strives with the phantoms of his inward world.
Yes, there be comfort when the sun is dark,
And time hath run his course, and the still'd sleepers
Lift up their heads at the tremendous crash
Of breaking worlds.—I know all this.—But here,
Upon this living earth, what is there found?
It is a place of groans and hopeless woe.
Let me then tear my hair and wring my hands,
And raise my voice of anguish and despair:
This is my portion now, all else is gone.

Lucia. Nay, think not virtuous innocence forsaken:
Put in high Heav'n thy trust, it will sustain thee.

Val. Ah! I did think when virtue bravely stood,
Fronting its valiant breast to the fierce onset
Of worthless power, that it full surely stood:
That ev'ry spiritual and righteous power
Was on its side: and in this faith, ofttimes,
Methought I could into the furnace mouth
Have thrust my hand, and grasp'd the molten flames.
Yet on his head it fell: that noble head,
Upon whose manly gracefulness was fix'd
The gaze of ev'ry eye.
Oh! on his lib'ral front there beam'd a look,
Unto the which all good and gen'rous hearts
Answer return'd.—It was a gentle head,
Bending in pleasant kindliness to all;
So that the timid, who approach'd him trembling,
With cheer'd and vaunting steps retir'd again.
It was a crowned head, yet was it left
Expos'd and fenceless in the hour of danger:
What should have been his safety was his bane.
Away, poor mock'ry of a wretched state!
(*Tearing the regal ornaments from her neck, and scattering them about.*)
Be ye strew'd to the winds! But for this let
We had been blest; for he as truly loved,
In simplest tenderness, as the poor hind,
Who takes his humble house-mate by the hand,
And says, "this is my all."—Off, cursed band!
Which round our happiness hath been entwin'd
Like to a strangling cord: upon the earth
Be thou defac'd and trampled! (*Tearing the tiara from her head and stamping upon it, then pacing up and down distractedly.*)

Lucia. Alas! my royal mistress, be intreated!
This furious grief will but enhance its pain:
Oh, bear yourself as more becomes your state!

Val. Yes, I will bear me as becomes my state.
I am a thing of wretchedness and ruin.

That upon which my pride and being grew
Lies in the dust, and be the dust my bed.
(*Throwing herself upon the ground, and pushing away* Lucia *and her other Attendants, who endeavour to raise her up again.*)
Forbear! forbear! and let me on the ground
Spread out my wretched hands. It pleases me
To think that in its breast there is a rest—
Yea, there lie they, unheeded and forgotten,
To whom all tongues give praise, all hearts give blessing.
Oh, ev'ry heart did bless him tho' he fell,
And ne'er a saving hand was found—Oh! oh!
(*Bursting into an agony of grief, and laying her head upon the ground, covered with both her hands.*)

Ella. (*to* Lucia *and Attendants.*) Do not surround her thus! I'll sit and watch her.
I will not speak, but sit and weep by her;
And she shall feel, ev'n thro' her heavy woe,
That sympathy and kindness are beside her.

Val. (*raising her head.*) There spoke a gentle voice: is Ella near me?

Ella. Yes, I am near, and shall be ever near you.

Val. Wilt thou? I do believe, sweet maid, thou wilt.
Lay thy soft hand on mine.—Yes, it feels kindly.
Had he, thy valiant love, been near his lord—
Ay, they did love each other with that love
Which brave men know—Oh, ev'ry noble stranger,
In admiration of his noble worth,
Did call him lord; whilst they, his native subjects,
They who had seen him grow within their walls,—
Alas! where lightly tripp'd his infant steps;
Where in gay sports his stripling's strength was tried;
Where tower'd in graceful pride his manly bloom;
Even there a lifeless, ghastly form he lies.

Enter another Domestic OFFICER, and seeing VALERIA on the ground, steps back.

Lucia. (*to the* Officer.) What would'st thou here?

Officer. I must, perforce, speak my unwelcome tidings.
The sultan is already in the palace,
And follows hard my steps with a fix'd purpose
To see the empress.

Val. (*raising herself half from the ground.*)
What fearful words are these? in my soul's anguish
Comes this so quickly on me? Be it so!
I cleave to th' earth! what have I now to do?
I am a stilled thing, abas'd and crush'd;
What boots it now who gazes on my woe?

Enter MAHOMET with OSMIR and his Train.

Ma. (*to* Osmir, *after looking at* Valeria *steadfastly.*) She stirs not, Osmir, ev'n at my approach.
She sits upon the ground, unmov'd and still.
Thou sorrow-clouded beauty, not less lovely (*Going up to her.*)
For this thy mournful state!—She heeds me not.
Empress and sov'reign dame, unto those titles
Which thou shalt ever wear, vouchsafe regard.
Still she regards me not. (*To* Osmir.)
Widow of Constantine; (*After a pause.*)

Val. (*rousing herself quickly.*) Ay, now thou callest on me by a name
Which I do hear. There is strength in the sound
To do all possible things! (*Rising quickly from the ground, and accosting* Mahomet *with an air of high assumed state.*)
What would'st thou say to her who proudly wears
That honour'd title?

Ma. Widow of Constantine; I come not here
In the stern spirit of a conqu'ror.
The slaughter of your people, by my order,
Is stopp'd; and to your bravely fallen lord
I have decreed such fun'ral obsequies
As suits a valiant warrior and a king.
Othus, and brave Rodrigo, and those men
Who to the last their master's corpse defended,
I have with honour grac'd.—Lacks there aught still
That, from the dark cloud which so deeply shades
That awful beauty, one approving ray
Might softly draw? Speak, and it shall be done.

Val. Ask aught from thee!

Ma. Yes, whatsoe'er thou wilt:
For now too well I feel I have no power
That can oppose thy will.

Val. I give you thanks: I have a thing to ask.

Ma. Name it, and it is granted.

Val. A place in the quiet tomb with my fall'n lord,
Therein to rest my head. This is my boon.

Ma. Well, and it shall be granted, fair Valeria,
When that fair form is fitted for such rest.
But whilst—(*Approaching her with an air of freer admiration.*)

Val. (*putting him at a distance haughtily.*)
No more:—I do not ask it sooner.
Yet that it be a sealed deed between us,
Permit me here to put into your hands
A mark'd memorial. Some few paces off
It is deposited; I will return
And give it to you instantly. [EXIT, *attended by* Lucia, Ella, *&c*

Ma. (*to* Osmir, *looking after her as she goes out.*) See, with what awful loveliness she moves!
Did all our bower'd prisons e'er contain
Aught like to that?

Osmir. It does, indeed, a wond'rous mixture seem

Of woman's loveliness with manly state;
And yet, methinks, I feel as tho' it were
Strange, and perplexing, and unsuitable.
'Tis not in nature.

Ma. Think'st thou so, good vizir?
Thou'rt right, belike, but it is wond'rous graceful.

(*A loud shriek of women heard without.*)

What shrieks are these? Run thou and learn the cause. (Osmir *going, is prevented by* Valeria, *who re-enters with her robe wrapped across her breast, and supported by* Lucia, *and* Ella, *and her other Attendants, who seem in great affliction round her.*)

Val. (*speaking as she enters.*) Mourn not; the thing is past that was to be.
Conduct me to the sultan: I have still
Strength to fulfil my task.

Ma. Great Prophet! what is this? What hast thou done? (*To* Valeria.)

Val. Brought thee the mark'd memorial of my right. (*Shewing a dagger.*)
And that I now am fitted for that rest,
The honour'd rest which you have granted me,
Being the fixed condition of your promise,
Here is the witness. (*Opening her robe, and shewing the wound in her breast.*)

Ma. Oh sad and cruel sight! Is there no aid?
Oh live, thou wond'rous creature, and be aught
Thy soul desires to be!

Val. (*after sinking back into a seat, supported by her Attendants.*) I now am what my soul desires to be,
And what one happy moment of wounded strength
Beyond the pitch of shrinking nature makes me;
Widow of Constantine, without reproach,
And worthy to partake the honour'd rest
Of the brave lord whose living love I shar'd,
As shares the noble wife a brave man's love.

Ma. Prophet of God, be there such ties as these?

Enter RODRIGO, and OTHUS wounded and supporting himself feebly upon his sheathed sword.

Val. And here come, in good time, my living friends:
I shall once more those gen'rous men behold,
The sad remains of those who lov'd their lord. (*Holding out a hand to each of them.*)
You know, brave brothers, how it is with me;
For such you were to him, and such to me
My heart now truly owns you.

Othus. Yes, we have heard: they told us as we enter'd.
Most noble woman, worthy of thy lord!
(*Endeavouring feebly to kneel and kiss her hand, whilst* Rodrigo *does so on the other side of her.*)

Val. This day's rough tempest's o'er, my good Rodrigo,
And thou still liv'st to strive in other storms:
Heaven's high blessing and my dying thanks
Rest on thy gen'rous worth!—I would say more,
But now I feel I may not.
Where art thou, Ella? (*Putting* Ella's *hand in his.*)
Here do I return
The trust thou gavest me; and if the sultan
Will yet to me one last request vouchsafe,
He will confirm this gift.

Ma. It is confirm'd.

Val. I thank you, gracious victor.
Heaven bless you both! (*To* Ella *and* Rodrigo, *who both kneel and kiss her hands.*)
Othus, the dead go to their silent rest, (*to* Othus, *looking fixedly at him.*)
And are no more remember'd: but thy lord—
He whom thou lovedst—he whom all hearts lov'd—
He who so noble and so gentle was—
Well skill'd art thou to paint the deeds of men—
Thou wilt not suffer him to be forgotten?
What means that woful motion of thy head?
Mine eyes wax dim, or do I truly see thee?
Thy visage has a strange and ghastly look:
How is it with thee?

Othus. As one who standeth at the city's gate,
Thro' which his earlier friends have passed, and waits
Impatiently, girt in his traveller's robe,
To hear the welcome creaking of its bars.

Val. Ah! art thou wounded then? Alas! alas!
Art thou too of our company? sad trav'llers
Unto a world unknown?

Othus. Nay, say not sad, tho' to a world unknown.
The foster'd nursling, at th' appointed season,
Who leaves his narrow crib and cottage-home
For the fair mansion of his lordly sire,
Goes to a world unknown.

Val. Ay, thou would'st cheer me, and I will be cheer'd.
There reigns above who casts his dark shade o'er us,
Mantling us on our way to glorious light.
I have offended, and I should be fearful,
But there is sent in mercy to my heart,
For which I humbly give——O no, I may not!
Death is upon me now.——Ella and Lucia:
Stand closer to me: let me firmly grasp
Something that I have lov'd. (*Catching hold of them with a convulsive grasp.*)
It will soon cease:
Farewell unto ye all! (*Dies.*)
(*A solemn pause, all standing round and gazing upon the body.*)

Othus. And this is the last form that we do wear,
Unto the sad and solemn gaze of those
Who have beheld us in our days of joy.
Honour and deepest rev'rence be to thee,

Thou honour'd dead! (*Bowing respectfully to the body.*)

Ma. Great God of heav'n! was this a woman's spirit
That took its flight?

Rod. Let ev'ry proudest worship be upon her,
For she is number'd with the gallant dead.
Not in the trophied field, nor sculptur'd dome;
No, nor beneath the dark and billowy deep
Lies one, o'er whom the valiant living would
With truer zeal their lofty banners wave,
Or bid the deep-mouth'd cannon nobly tell
How brave men mourn the brave.
How is it, Othus? something in thine eye
Of joyous sadness looks upon me wistfully.
(To Othus, *who takes him tenderly by the hand.*)

Othus. Dost thou not guess?—But I would speak to thee
Of a brave soldier, who, in one short moment
Of nature's weakness, has a wound receiv'd
That will unto his life as fatal prove
As fellest foeman's thrust: who in his rest
Will not be mourn'd as brave men mourn the brave.
Justiniani in his cave of shame——

Rod. And therein let him perish!
He hath disgrac'd a soldier's honest fame:
He hath disgrac'd the country of his birth:
He hath——It makes me stamp upon the ground
To think that one, who grasp'd with brother's hand
The noble Constantine, should basely turn.
Name not his cursed name!

Othus. Art thou so stern? In a lone cave he groans,
On the damp earth, in deepest agony
Of the soul's shrewdest sufferings. I have
By an old soldier been advis'd of this,
And I would go to him, but that I feel
I needs must go where a more powerful call
Doth summon me.

Rod. (*softened.*) Ah! must thou then so soon, my gen'rous Othus!
Must thou so soon? Well, ask whate'er thou wilt:
I give my chafed passion to the winds.
Ah! goest thou? Do I the last remain
Of those who lov'd the noble Constantine?
The last of a brave band? Alas! alas!
(*Embracing* Othus *tenderly.*)

Osmir. (*to* Mahomet, *who strides up and down in gloomy agitation.*) Most mighty Mahomet, what thus disturbs you?
May not your slave in humble zeal be told?

Ma. Away! away! thy humble zeal I know;
Yea, and the humble zeal of such as thou art.
The willing service of a brave man's heart,
That precious pearl, upon the earth exists,
But I have found it not.
(*Turning to* Othus *and* Rodrigo.)
Ye valiant men who have so serv'd your prince,
There still is in the world a mighty monarch,
Who, if he might retain you near his throne,
Shall he say near his heart, in such dear zeal?
Would think his greatness honour'd.

Othus. Great sultan, thou hast conquer'd with such arms
As power has given to thee, th' imperial city
Of royal Constantine; but other arms,
That might the friends of Constantine subdue,
Heav'n has denied thee.

Rod. No, mighty prince; they who have serv'd for love,
Cannot like flying pennants be transferr'd
From bark to bark.

Ma. (*impatiently.*) I understand you well, and you are free.
Mine arms, such as they are, of heav'n are bless'd,
That is enough.

Othus. That were indeed enough; but heaven ofttimes
Success bestows where blessing is denied.
A secret spirit whispers to my heart,
That in these walls your weaken'd wretched race,
Slaves of their slaves, in gloomy prison'd pomp
Shall shed each others blood, and make these towers
A place of groans and anguish, not of bliss.
And think not when the good and valiant perish
By wordly power o'erwhelm'd, that heaven's high favour
Shines not on them.—Oh, no! then shines it most.
For then in them it shews th' approving world
The worth of its best work.
And from their fate a glorious lesson springs;
A lesson of such high ennobling power;
Connecting us with such exalted things
As all do feel, but none with such true force;
Such joy, such triumph, as a dying man.
(*Falling back into the arms of* Rodrigo.)

TO THE READER

AFTER an interval of nine years, I offer to the Public a third volume of the "Series of Plays;" hoping that it will be received, as the preceding volumes have been, with some degree of favour and indulgence. This, I confess, is making very slow progress in my promised undertaking; and I could offer some reasonable excuse for an apparent relaxation of industry, were I not afraid it might seem to infer a greater degree of expectation or desire, on the part of my readers, to receive the remainder of the work, than I am at all entitled to suppose.

With the exception of a small piece, in two acts, at the end of the book, this volume is entirely occupied with different representations of one passion; and a passion, too, which has been supposed to be less adapted to dramatic purposes than any other—Fear. It has been thought that, in Tragedy at least, the principal character could not possibly be actuated by this passion, without becoming so far degraded as to be incapable of engaging the sympathy and interest of the spectator or reader. I am, however, inclined to think, that even Fear, as it is under certain circumstances, and to a certain degree a universal passion, (for our very admiration of Courage rests upon this idea,) is capable of being made in the tragic drama, as it often is in real life, very interesting, and consequently not abject.

The first of these plays, is a Tragedy of five acts, the principal character of which is a woman, under the dominion of Superstitious Fear; and that particular species of it, (the fear of ghosts, or the returning dead,) which is so universal and inherent in our nature, that it can never be eradicated from the mind, let the progress of reason or philosophy be what it may. A brave and wise man of the 19th century, were he lodged for the night in a lone apartment where murder has been committed, would not so easily believe, as a brave and wise man of the 14th century, that the restless spirit from its grave might stalk round his bed and open his curtains in the stillness of midnight: but should circumstances arise to impress him with such a belief, he would feel the emotions of Fear as intensely, though firmly persuaded that such beings have no power to injure him. Nay, I am persuaded that, could we suppose any person with a mind so constituted as to hold intercourse with such beings entirely devoid of Fear, we should turn from him with repugnance as something unnatural—as an instance of mental monstrosity. If I am right then in believing this impression of the mind to be so universal, I shall not be afraid of having so far infringed on the dignity of my heroine, as to make her an improper object to excite dramatic interest. Those, I believe, who possess strong imagination, quick fancy, and keen feeling, are most easily affected by this species of Fear: I have, therefore, made Orra a lively, cheerful, buoyant character, when not immediately under its influence; and even extracting from her superstitious propensity a kind of wild enjoyment, which tempts her to nourish and cultivate the enemy that destroys her. The catastrophe is such as Fear, I understand, does more commonly produce than any other passion. I have endeavoured to trace the inferior characters of the piece with some degree of variety, so as to stand relieved from the principal figure; but as I am not aware that any particular objection is likely to be made to any of them, they shall be left entirely to the mercy of my reader.

But if it has been at all necessary to offer any apology for exhibiting Fear as the actuating pirnciple of the heroine of the first play, what must I say in defence of a much bolder step in the one that follows it? in which I have made Fear, and the fear of Death too, the actuating principle of a hero of Tragedy. I can only say, that I believed it might be done, without submitting him to any degradation that would affect the sympathy and interest I intended to excite. I must confess, however, that, being unwilling to appropriate this passion in a serious form to my own sex entirely, when the subjects of all the other passions, hitherto delineated in this series, are men, I have attempted what did indeed appear at first sight almost impracticable. This *esprit de corps* must also plead my excuse for loading the passion in question with an additional play. The fear of Death is here exhibited in a brave character, placed under such new and appalling circumstances as might, I supposed, overcome the most courageous; and as soon as he finds himself in a situation like those in which he has been accustomed to be bold, viz. with arms in his hand and an enemy to encounter, he is made immediately to resume all his wonted spirit. Even after he believes himself to be safe, he returns again to attack, in behalf of his companion, who beseeches him to fly, and who is not exposed to any personal danger, a force so greatly superior to his own as to leave himself scarcely a chance for redemption.

That great active courage in opposing danger, and great repugnance from passive endurance and unknown change which are independent of our exertions, are perfectly consistent, is a point, I believe, very well ascertained. Soldiers, who have distinguished themselves honourably in the field, have

died pusillanimously on the scaffold; while men brought up in peaceful habits, who, without some very strong excitement, would have marched with trepidation to battle, have died under the hands of the executioner with magnanimous composure. And, I believe, it has been found by experience, that women have always behaved with as much resolution and calmness in that tremendous situation as men; although I do not believe that women, in regard to uncertain danger, even making allowance for their inferior strength and unfavourable habits of life, are so brave as men. I have therefore supposed that, though active and passive courage are often united, they frequently exist separately, and independently of each other. Nor ought we to be greatly surprised at this when we consider, that a man, actively brave, when so circumstanced that no exertion of strength or boldness is of any avail, finds himself in a new situation, contrary to all former experience; and is therefore taken at greater disadvantage than men of a different character. He, who has less of that spirit which naturally opposes an enemy, and still hopes to overcome while the slightest probability remains of success, has often before, in imagination at least, been in a similar predicament, and is consequently better prepared for it. But it is not want of fortitude to bear bodily sufferings, or even deliberately inflicted death, under the circumstances commonly attending it, that the character of Osterloo exhibits. It is the horror he conceives on being suddenly awakened to the imagination of the awful retributions of another world, from having the firm belief of them forced at once upon his mind by extraordinary circumstances, which so miserably quells an otherwise undaunted spirit. I only contend for the consistency of brave men shrinking from passive sufferings and unknown change, to shew, that so far from transgressing, I have, in this character, kept much within the bounds which our experience of human nature would have allowed me. If I am tediously anxious to vindicate myself on this subject, let my reader consider, that I am urged to it from the experience I have had of the great reluctance with which people generally receive characters which are not drawn agreeably to the received rules of dramatic dignity, and common-place heroism.

It may be objected that the fear of Death is in him so closely connected with Superstitious Fear, that the picture traced in this play bears too near a resemblance to that which is shewn in the foregoing. But the fears of Orra have nothing to do with apprehension of personal danger, and spring solely from a natural horror of supernatural intercourse: while those of Osterloo arise, as I have already noticed, from a strong sense of guilt, suddenly roused within him by extraordinary circumstances; and the prospect of being plunged, almost immediately by death, into an unknown state of punishment and horror. Not knowing by what natural means his guilt could be brought to light, in a manner so extraordinary, a mind the least superstitious, in those days, perhaps I may even say in these, would have considered it to be supernatural; and the dreadful consequences, so immediately linked to it, are surely sufficiently strong to unhinge the firmest mind, having no time allowed to prepare itself for the tremendous change. If there is any person, who, under such circumstances, could have remained unappalled, he does not belong to that class of men, who, commanding the fleets and armies of their grateful and admiring country, dare every thing by flood and by field that is dangerous and terrific for her sake; but to one far different, whom hard drinking, opium, or impiety have sunk into a state of unmanly and brutish stupidity. It will probably be supposed that I have carried the consequences of his passion too far in the catastrophe to be considered as natural; but the only circumstance in the piece that is not entirely invention, is the catastrophe. The idea of it I received from a story told to me by my mother, many years ago, of a man condemned to the block, who died in the same manner; and since the play has been written, I have had the satisfaction of finding it confirmed by a circumstance very similar, related in Miss Plumtre's interesting account of the atrocities committed in Lions by the revolutionary tribunals.*

The story of the piece is imaginary, though one of its principal circumstances, by a coincidence somewhat whimsical, I found after it was written to agree with real history. In looking over Planta's History of Switzerland, I found that a violent pestilence, about the time when I have supposed it to happen, did actually carry off great multitudes of people in that country.† Had it been a real story, handed down by tradition, the circumstances of which were believed to be miraculous, I should have allowed it to remain so; but not thinking myself entitled to assume so much, I have attempted to trace a natural connection from association of ideas, by which one thing

* Plumtre's Residence in France, vol. i. p. 339.

† A plague raged in Switzerland in 1349. It was preceded by terrible earthquakes; about a third part of the inhabitants were destroyed.

The monastery of St. Maurice, where the story of the play is supposed to have happened, is situated in a narrow pass between lofty precipices, where the Rhone gushes from the Valais. The founder was Segismond, King of Burgundy. It was richly endowed; the monks at one period leading very luxurious lives, hunting and keeping hounds, &c. It was dedicated to St. Maurice and his companions, the holy martyrs of the Theban Legion.

Many of the abbots and priors in Switzerland were, in those days, feudal lords of the empire, and maintained troops of their own. Even some of the abbesses, presiding over convents of nuns, were possessed of the same power and privilege.

produces another, or is insinuated to have done so from beginning to end. The only circumstance that cannot be accounted for on this principle, is the falling of the lot to the guilty hand; and this must be conceded to me as a providential direction, or happy coincidence.

Contrary to our established laws of Tragedy, this Play consists only of three acts, and is written in prose. I have made it short, because I was unwilling to mix any lighter matter with a subject so solemn; and in extending it to the usual length without doing so, it would have been in danger of becoming monotonous and harassing. I have written it in prose, that the expressions of the agitated person might be plain though strong, and kept as closely as possible to the simplicity of nature. Such a subject would, I believe, have been weakened, not enriched, by poetical embellishment. Whether I am right or wrong in this opinion, I assure my reader it has not been indolence that has tempted me to depart from common rules.

A Comedy on Fear, the chief character being a man, is not liable to the objections I have supposed might be made to a Tragedy under the same circumstances. But a very great degree of constitutional cowardice would have been a picture too humiliating to afford any amusement, or even to engage the attention for any considerable time. The hero of my third Play, therefore, is represented as timid indeed, and endeavouring to conceal it by a boastful affectation of gallantry and courage; but at the same time, worked upon by artful contrivances to believe himself in such a situation as would have miserably overcome many a one, who, on ordinary occasions of danger, would have behaved with decorum. Cowardice in him has been cultivated by indulgence of every kind: and self-conceit and selfishness are the leading traits of his character, which might have been orginally trained to useful and honourable activity. Fear, in a mixed character of this kind, is, I apprehend, a very good subject for Comedy, and in abler hands would certainly have proved itself to be so.

The last Play in the volume is a drama of two acts, the subject of which is Hope. This passion, when it acts permanently, loses the character of a passion, and when it acts violently is like Anger, Joy, or Grief, too transient to become the subject of a piece of any length. It seemed to me, in fact, neither fit for Tragedy nor Comedy; and like Anger, Joy, or Grief, I once thought to have left it out of my Series altogether. However, what it wanted in strength it seemed to have in grace; and being of a noble, kindly and engaging nature, it drew me to itself; and I resolved to do every thing for it that I could, in spite of the objections which had at first deterred me. The piece is very short, and can neither be called Tragedy nor Comedy. It may indeed appear, for a passion so much allied to all our cheerful and exhilarating thoughts, to approach too nearly to the former; but Hope, when its object is of great importance, must so often contend with despondency, that it rides like a vessel on the stormy ocean, rising on the billow's ridge but for a moment. Cheerfulness, the character of common Hope, is, in strong Hope, like glimpses of sun-shine in a cloudy sky.

As this passion, though more pleasing, is not so powerfully interesting as those that are more turbulent, and was therefore in danger of becoming languid and tiresome, if long dwelt upon without interruption; and at the same time of being sunk into shade or entirely overpowered, if relieved from it by variety of strong marked characters in the inferior persons of the drama, I have introduced into the scenes several songs. So many indeed, that I have ventured to call it a Musical Drama. I have, however, avoided one fault so common, I might say universal, in such pieces, viz. making people sing in situations in which it is not natural for them to do so: and creating a necessity for either having the first characters performed by those, who can both act and sing, (persons very difficult to find,) or permitting them to be made entirely insipid and absurd For this purpose, the songs are all sung by those who have little or nothing to act, and introduced when nothing very interesting is going on. They are also supposed not to be spontaneous expressions of sentiment in the singer, but (as songs in ordinary life usually are) compositions of other people, which have been often sung before, and are only generally applicable to the present occasion.

The story is imaginary, but I have endeavoured to make it, as far as my information enabled me, to correspond with the circumstances of the time and place in which it is supposed to have happened.

Having said all that appears to me necessary in regard to the contents of the volume, I should now leave my reader to peruse it without further hindrance; but as this will probably be the last volume of Plays I shall ever publish, I must beg to detain him a few moments longer. For I am inclined to think, he may have some curiosity to know what is the extent of my plan in a task I have so far fulfilled; and I shall satisfy it most cheerfully. It is my intention, if I live long enough, to add to this work the passions of Remorse, Jealousy, and Revenge. Joy, Grief, and Anger, as I have already said, are generally of too transient a nature, and are too frequently the attendants of all our other passions to be made the subjects of an entire play. And though this objection cannot be urged in regard to Pride and Envy, two powerful passions which I have not yet named; Pride would make, I should think, a dull subject, unless it were merely taken as the groundwork of more turbulent passions; and Envy, being that state of mind, which, of all others,

meets with least sympathy, could only be endured in Comedy or Farce, and would become altogether disgusting in Tragedy. I have besides, in some degree, introduced this latter passion into the work already, by making it a companion, or rather a component part of Hatred. Of all our passions, Remorse and Jealousy appear to me to be the best fitted for representation. If this be the case, it is fortunate for me that I have reserved them for the end of my task; and that they have not been already published, read, and very naturally laid aside as unfit for the stage, because they have not been produced upon it.

My reader may likewise wish to know why, having so many years ago promised to go on publishing this work, I should now intend to leave it off, though I still mean to continue writing till it shall be completed; and this supposed wish, I think myself bound to gratify.—The Series of Plays was originally published in the hope that some of the pieces it contains, although first given to the Public from the press, might in time make their way to the stage, and there be received and supported with some degree of public favour. But the present situation of dramatic affairs is greatly against every hope of this kind; and should they ever become more favourable, I have now good reason to believe, that the circumstance of these plays having been already published, would operate strongly against their being received upon the stage. I am therefore strongly of opinion that I ought to reserve the remainder of the work in manuscript, if I would not run the risk of entirely frustrating my original design. Did I believe that their having been already published would not afterwards obstruct their way to the stage, the untowardness of present circumstances should not prevent me from continuing to publish.

Having thus given an account of my views and intentions regarding this work, I hope that, should no more of it be published in my lifetime, it will not be supposed I have abandoned or become weary of my occupation; which is in truth as interesting and pleasing to me now as it was at the beginning.

But when I say, present circumstances are unfavourable for the reception of these Plays upon the stage, let it not be supposed that I mean to throw any reflection upon the prevailing taste for dramatic amusements. The public have now to choose between what we shall suppose are well-written and well-acted Plays, the words of which are not heard, or heard but imperfectly by two thirds of the audience, while the finer and more pleasing traits of the acting are by a still greater proportion lost altogether, and splendid pantomime, or pieces whose chief object is to produce striking scenic effect, which can be seen and comprehended by the whole. So situated, it would argue, methinks, a very pedantic love indeed, for what is called legitimate Drama, were we to prefer the former. A love for active, varied movement in the objects before us; for striking contrasts of light and shadow; for splendid decorations and magnificent scenery, is as inherent in us as the interest we take in the representation of the natural passions and characters of men: and the most cultivated minds may relish such exhibitions, if they do not, when both are fairly offered to their choice, prefer them. Did our ears and our eyes permit us to hear and see distinctly in a Theatre so large as to admit of chariots and horsemen, and all the "pomp and circumstance of war," I see no reason why we should reject them. They would give variety, and an appearance of truth to the scenes of heroic Tragedy, that would very much heighten its effect. We ought not, then, to find fault with the taste of the Public for preferring an inferior species of entertainment, good of its kind, to a superior one, faintly and imperfectly given.

It has been urged, as a proof of this supposed bad taste in the Public, by one whose judgment on these subjects is and ought to be high authority, that a play, possessing considerable merit, was produced some years ago on Drury-Lane stage, and notwithstanding the great support it received from excellent acting and magnificent decoration, entirely failed. It is very true that, in spite of all this, it failed, during the eight nights it continued to be acted, to produce houses sufficiently good to induce the Managers to revive it afterwards. But it ought to be acknowledged, that that piece had defects in it as an acting Play, which served to counterbalance those advantages; and likewise that, if any supposed merit in the writing ought to have redeemed those defects, in a theatre, so large and so ill calculated to convey sound as the one in which it was performed, it was impossible this could be felt or comprehended by even a third part of the audience.

The size of our theatres, then, is what I chiefly allude to, when I say, present circumstances are unfavourable for the production of these Plays. While they continue to be of this size, it is a vain thing to complain either of want of taste in the Public, or want of inclination in Managers to bring forward new pieces of merit, taking it for granted that there are such to produce. Nothing can be truly relished by the most cultivated audience that is not distinctly heard and seen, and Managers must produce what will be relished. Shakspeare's Plays, and some of our other old Plays, indeed, attract full houses, though they are often repeated, because, being familiar to the audience, they can still understand and follow them pretty closely, though but imperfectly heard; and surely this is no bad sign of our public taste. And besides this advantage, when a piece is familiar to the audience the expression of the actors' faces is much better understood, though seen imperfectly; for the stronger marked traits of feeling which even in a large theatre may reach

the eyes of a great part of the audience, from the recollection of finer and more delicate indications, formerly seen so delightfully mingled with them in the same countenances during the same passages of the Play, will, by association, still convey them to the mind's eye, though it is the mind's eye only which they have reached.

And this thought leads me to another defect in large theatres, that ought to be considered.

Our great tragic actress, Mrs. Siddons, whose matchless powers of expression have so long been the pride of our stage, and the most admired actors of the present time, have been brought up in their youth in small theatres, where they were encouraged to enter thoroughly into the characters they represented; and to express in their faces that variety of fine fleeting emotion which nature, in moments of agitation, assumes, and the imitation of which we are taught by nature to delight in. But succeeding actors will only consider expression of countenance as addressed to an audience removed from them to a greater distance; and will only attempt such strong expression as can be perceived and have effect at a distance. It may easily be imagined what exaggerated expression will then get into use; and I should think, even this strong expression will not only be exaggerated but false. For, as we are enabled to assume the outward signs of passion, not by mimicking what we have beheld in others, but by internally assuming, in some degree, the passion itself; a mere outline of it cannot, I apprehend, be given as an outline of figure frequently is, where all that is delineated is true though the whole is not filled up. Nay, besides having it exaggerated and false, it will perpetually be thrust in where it ought not to be. For real occasions of strong expression not occurring often enough, and weaker being of no avail, to avoid an apparent barrenness of countenance, they will be tempted to introduce it where it is not wanted, and thereby destroy its effect where it is.—I say nothing of expression of voice, to which the above observations obviously apply. This will become equally, if not in a greater degree, false and exaggerated, in actors trained from their youth in a large theatre.

But the department of acting that will suffer most under these circumstances, is that which particularly regards the gradually unfolding of the passions, and has, perhaps, hitherto been less understood than any other part of the art—I mean Soliloquy. What actor in his senses will then think of giving to the solitary musing of a perturbed mind that muttered, imperfect articulation which grows by degrees into words; that heavy, suppressed voice as of one speaking through sleep; that rapid burst of sounds which often succeeds the slow languid tones of distress; those sudden, untuned exclamations which, as if frightened at their own discord, are struck again into silence as sudden and abrupt, with all the corresponding variety of countenance that belongs to it;—what actor, so situated, will attempt to exhibit all this? No; he will be satisfied, after taking a turn or two across the front of the stage, to place himself directly in the middle of it; and there, spreading out his hands as if he were addressing some person whom it behoved him to treat with great ceremony, to tell to himself, in an audible uniform voice, all the secret thoughts of his own heart. When he has done this, he will think, and he will think rightly, that he has done enough.

The only valuable part of acting that will then remain to us, will be expression of gesture, grace and dignity, supposing that these also shall not become affected by being too much attended to and studied.

It may be urged against such apprehensions that, though the theatres of the metropolis should be large, they will be supplied with actors, who have been trained to the stage in small country-theatres. An actor of ambition (and all actors of genius are such) will practise with little heart in the country what he knows will be of no use to him on a London stage; not to mention that the style of acting in London will naturally be the fashionable and prevailing style elsewhere. Acting will become a less respectable profession than it has continued to be from the days of Garrick; and the few actors, who add to the natural advantages requisite to it, the accomplishments of a scholar and a gentleman, will soon be wed away by the hand of time, leaving nothing of the same species behind them to spring from a neglected and sapless root.

All I have said on this subject, may still in a greater degree be applied to actresses; for the features and voice of a woman, being naturally more delicate than those of a man, she must suffer in proportion from the defects of a large theatre.

The great disadvantage of such over-sized buildings to natural and genuine acting, is, I believe, very obvious; but they have other defects which are not so readily noticed, because they, in some degree, run counter to the common opinion of their great superiority in every thing that regards general effect. The diminutive appearance of individual figures, and the straggling poverty of grouping, which unavoidably takes place when a very wide and lofty stage is not filled by a great number of people, is very injurious to general effect. This is particularly felt in Comedy, and all plays on domestic subjects; and in those scenes also of the grand drama, where two or three persons only are produced at a time. To give figures who move upon it proper effect, there must be depth as well as width of stage; and the one must bear some proportion to the other, if we would not make every closer or more confined scene appear like a section of a long passage, in which the actors move before us, apparently in one line, like the figures of a magic lanthorn.

It appears to me, that when a stage is of such a size that as many persons as generally come into action at one time in our grandest and best-peopled plays, can be produced on the front of it in groups, without crowding together more than they would naturally do any where else for the convenience of speaking to one another, all is gained in point of general effect that can well be gained. When modern gentlemen and ladies talk to one another in a spacious saloon, or when ancient warriors and dames conversed together in an old baronial hall, they do not, and did not stand further apart than when conversing in a room of common dimensions; neither ought they to do so on the stage. All width of stage, beyond what is convenient for such natural grouping, is lost; and worse than lost, for it is injurious. It is continually presenting us with something similar to that which always offends us in a picture, where the canvas is too large for the subject; or in a face, where the features are too small for the bald margin of cheeks and forehead that surrounds them.

Even in the scenes of professed show and spectacle, where nothing else is considered, it appears to me that a very large stage is in some degree injurious to general effect. Even when a battle is represented in our theatres, the great width of the stage is a disadvantage; for as it never can nor ought to be represented but partially, and the part which is seen should be crowded and confused, opening a large front betrays your want of numbers; or should you be rich enough in this respect to fill it sufficiently, imposes upon you a difficulty seldom surmounted, viz. putting the whole mass sufficiently in action to sustain the deception.* When a moderate number of combatants, so as to make one connected group, are fighting on the front of a moderately wide stage, which they sufficiently occupy, it is an easy thing, through the confusion of their brandished weapons and waving banners, to give the appearance of a deep active battle beyond them, seen, as it were, through a narrow pass; and beholding all the tumult of battle in the small view opened before us, our imagination supplies what is hid. If we open a wider view, we give the imagination less to do, and supply what it would have done less perfectly. In narrowing our battle, likewise, we could more easily throw smoke or an appearance of dust over the back ground, and procure for our fancy an unlimited space.

In processions also, the most pleasing effect to our imaginations is, when the marshalled figures are seen in long perspective which requires only depth of stage; and the only advantage a wide stage has on such occasions is containing the assembled mass of figures, when the moving line stops and gathers itself together on the front. The rich confusion of such a crowd is indeed very brilliant and pleasing for a short time, but it is dearly purchased at the price of many sacrifices.

On those occasions too, when many people are assembled on the front of the stage to give splendor and importance to some particular scene, or to the conclusion of a piece, the general effect is often injured by great width of stage. For the crowd is supposed to be attracted to the spot by something which engages their attention; and, as they must not surround this object of attention, (which would be their natural arrangement,) lest they should conceal it from the audience, they are obliged to spread themselves out in a long straight line on each side of it: now the shorter those lines or wings are, spreading out from the centre figures, the less do they offend against natural arrangement, and the less artificial and formal does the whole scene appear.

In short, I scarcely know of any advantage which a large stage possesses over one of a moderate size without great abatements, even in regard to general effect, unless it be when it is empty, and scenery alone engages our attention, or when figures appear at a distance on the back ground only. Something in confirmation of what I have been saying, has, perhaps, been felt by most people on entering a grand cathedral, where, figures moving in the long aisles at a distance, add grandeur to the building by their diminished appearance; but in approaching near enough to become themselves distinct objects of attention, look stunted and mean, without serving to enlarge by comparison its general dimensions.

There is also, I apprehend, greater difficulty, in a very wide and lofty stage, to produce variety of light and shadow; and this often occasions the more solemn scenes of Tragedy to be represented in a full, staring, uniform light that ought to be dimly seen in twilight uncertainty; or to have the objects on them shewn by partial gleams only, while the deepened shade around gives a sombre indistinctness to the other parts of the stage, particularly favourable to solemn or terrific impressions. And it would be more difficult, I imagine to throw down light upon the objects on such a stage, which I have never in-

* The objections above do not apply to scenes where sieges are represented; for then the more diminished the actors appear, the greater is the importance and magnitude given to the walls or castle which they attack, while the towers and buttresses, &c. sufficiently occupy the width and height of the stage, and conceal the want of numbers and general activity in the combatants. And the managers of our present large theatre have, in my opinion, shown great judgment in introducing into their mixed pieces of late so many good scenes of this kind, that have, to my fancy at least, afforded a grand and animating show. Nor do they fairly apply to those combats or battles, into which horses are introduced; for a moderate number of those noble animals may be made to occupy and animate, in one connected group, the front of the widest stage that we are in danger of having, and to conceal the want of a numerous host and tumultuous battle behind them.

deed seen attempted in any theatre, though it might surely be done in one of moderate dimensions with admirable effect. In short, a great variety of pleasing effects from light and shadow might be more easily produced on a smaller stage, that would give change and even interest to pieces otherwise monotonous and heavy; and would often be very useful in relieving the exhausted strength of the chief actors, while want of skill in the inferior could be craftily concealed.* On this part of the subject, however, I speak with great diffidence, not knowing to what perfection machinery for the management of light may be brought in a large theatre. But at the same time, I am certain that, by a judicious use of light and scenery, an artificial magnitude may be given to a stage of a moderate size, that would, to the eye, as far as distance in perspective is concerned, have an effect almost equal to any thing that can be produced on a larger stage: for that apparent magnitude arising from succession of objects, depends upon the depth of the stage, much more than its width and loftiness, which are often detrimental to it; and a small or moderate sized theatre may have, without injury to proportion, a very deep stage.

It would be, I believe, impertinent to pur-

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* Note.—That strong light cast up from lamps on the front of the stage which has long been in use in all our theatres, is certainly very unfavourable to the appearance and expression of individual actors, and also to the general effect of their grouped figures. When a painter wishes to give intelligence and expression to a face, he does not make his lights hit upon the under part of his chin, the nostrils, and the under curve of the eye-brows, turning of course all the shadows upwards. He does the very reverse of all this; that the eye may look hollow and dark under the shade of its brow; that the shadow of the nose may shorten the upper lip, and give a greater character of sense to the mouth; and that any fulness of the under chin may be the better concealed. From this disposition of the light in our theatres, whenever an actor, whose features are not particularly sharp and pointed, comes near the front of the stage, and turns his face fully to the audience, every feature immediately becomes shortened and snub, and less capable of any expression, unless it be of the ludicrous kind. This at least will be the effect produced to those who are seated under or on the same level with the stage, making now a considerable proportion of an audience; while to those who sit above it, the lights and shadows, at variance with the natural bent of the features, will make the whole face appear confused, and (compared to what it would have been with light thrown upon it from another direction) unintelligible.——As to the general effect of grouped figures; close groups or crowds, ranged on the front of the stage, when the light is thrown up upon them, have a harsh flaring appearance; for the foremost figures catch the light, and are too much distinguished from those behind, from whom it is intercepted. But when the light is thrown down upon the objects, this cannot be the case: for then it will glance along the heads of the whole crowd, even to the very bottom of the stage, presenting a varied harmonious mass of figures to the eye, deep, mellow and brilliant.

It may, perhaps, be objected to these last observations, that the most popular of our night scenes in nature, and those which have been most frequently imitated by the painter, are groups of figures with strong light thrown up upon them, such as gypsies or banditti round a fire, or villagers in a smith's forge, &c. But the striking and pleasing effect of such scenes is owing to the deep darkness which surrounds them; while the ascending smoke, tinged with flame-colour in the one case, and the rafters or higher parts of the wall catching a partial gleam in the other, connect the brilliant colouring of the figures with the deep darkness behind them, which would else appear hard and abrupt, and thus at the same time produce strong contrast with harmonious gradation. I need scarcely mention, for it is almost too obvious, that the effect of the light so thrown on the faces of those figures abundantly confirm my first observations, regarding the features and expression of individuals faces! Yet I do not mean to say that light thrown up from the front of a stage, where light is also admitted from many other quarters, can have so strong an effect upon the countenances as in such situations.

Groups of gypsies, &c. are commonly composed but of one circle of figures; for did they amount to any thing like a deepened group or crowd, the figures behind would be almost entirely lost. But those grand night-scenes containing many figures which we admire in nature or in painting,—processions by torch-light or in an illuminated street,—crowds gathered to behold a conflagration, &c. always have the light thrown down upon them.—It may be urged indeed, that the greater part of our stage-scenes are meant to represent day and not night, so that the observations above are but partially applicable. It is very true that stage-scenes generally are supposto be seen by day-light; but day-light comes from heaven, not from the earth; even within-doors our whitened ceilings are made to throw down reflected light upon us, while our pavements and carpets are of a darker colour.

In what way this great defect of all our theatres could be rectified, I am not at all competent to say. Yet, I should suppose, that by bringing forward the roof of the stage as far as its boards or floor, and placing a row of lamps with reflectors along the inside of the wooden front-piece, such a light as is wanted might be procured. The green curtain in this case behoved not to be let down, as it now is, from the front-piece, but some feet within it; and great care taken that nothing should be placed near the lamps capable of catching fire. If this were done, no boxes, I suppose, could be made upon the stage; but the removal of stage-boxes would in itself be a great advantage. The front-piece at the top; the boundary of the stage from the orchestra at the bottom; and the pilasters on each side, would then represent the frame of a great moving picture, entirely separated and distinct, from the rest of the theatre: whereas, at present, an unnatural mixture of audience and actors, of house and stage takes place near the front of the stage, which destroys the general effect in a very great degree.

sue this subject any farther; and I beg pardon for having obtruded it so far where it may not appear naturally to be called for. I plead in my excuse an almost irresistible desire to express my thoughts, in some degree, upon what has occupied them considerably; and a strong persuasion that I ought not, how unimportant soever they may be, entirely to conceal them.

I must now beg leave to return my thanks to the Public for that indulgent favour which for so many years has honoured and cheered my labour; and whether more or less liberally dealt to me, has at all times been sufficient to prevent me from laying down my pen in despair. Favour, which has gratified me the more sensibly, because I have shared it with contemporary writers of the highest poetic genius, whose claims to such distinction are so powerful.

ORRA: A TRAGEDY.

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

MEN.

HUGHOBERT, *Count of* Aldenberg.
GLOTTENBAL, *his Son.*
THEOBALD OF FALKENSTEIN, *a Nobleman of reduced Fortune, and Co-burgher of Basle.*
RUDIGERE, *a Knight, and Commander of one of the Free Companies returned from the Wars, and Bastard of a Branch of the Family of* Aldenberg.
HARTMAN, *friend of* Theobald, *and Banneret of Basle.*
URSTON, *a Confessor.*
FRANKÓ, *Chief of a Band of Outlaws.*
MAURICE, *an Agent of* Rudigere's.
Soldiers, Vassals, Outlaws, &c.

WOMEN.

ORRA, *Heiress of another Branch of the Family of* Aldenberg, *and Ward to* Hughobert.
ELEANORA, *Wife to* Hughobert.
CATHRINA, ALICE, } *Ladies attending on* Orra.

SCENE—Switzerland, *in the* Canton of Basle, *and afterwards in the* Borders *of the* Black Forest *in* Subaia.

TIME—*toward the end of the 14th Century.*

ACT I.

SCENE I.—AN OPEN SPACE BEFORE THE WALLS OF A CASTLE, WITH WILD MOUNTAINS BEYOND IT.

Enter GLOTTENBAL, armed as from the Lists, but bare-headed and in disorder, and his arms soiled with earth or sand, which an Attendant is now and then brushing off, whilst another follows bearing his helmet; with him enters MAURICE, followed by RUDIGERE, who is also armed, and keeps by himself, pacing to and fro at the bottom of the stage, whilst the others come forward.

Glot. (*speaking as he enters, loud and boastingly.*) Aye, let him triumph in his paltry honours,
Won by mere trick and accident. Good faith!
It were a shame to call it strength or skill.
Were it not, Rudigere? (*Calling to* Rudigere, *who answers not.*)
Maur. His brow is dark, his tongue is lock'd, my Lord;
There come no words from him; he bears it not
So manfully as thou dost, noble Glottenbal.
Glot. Fy on't! I mind it not.
Maur. And wherefore should'st thou? This same Theobald,
Count and co-burgher—mixture most unseemly
Of base and noble,—know we not right well
What powers assist him? Mark'd you not, my Lord,
How he did turn him to the witchy north,
When first he mounted; making his fierce steed,
That paw'd and rear'd and shook its harness'd neck
In generous pride, bend meekly to the earth
Its maimed crest, like one who made obeisance?
Glot. Ha! did'st thou really see it?
Maur. Yes, brave Glottenbal,
I did right truly; and besides myself,
Many observ'd it.
Glot. Then 'tis manifest
How all this foil hath been. Who e'er before
Saw one with such advantage of the field,
Lose it so shamefully? By my good fay!
Barring foul play and other dev'lish turns,
I'd keep my courser's back with any Lord,
Or Knight, or Squire that e'er bestrode a steed.
Think'st thou not, honest Maurice, that I could?
Maur. Who doubts it, good my Lord? This Falkenstein
Is but a clown to you.
Glot. Well let him boast.
Boasting I scorn; but I will shortly shew him
What these good arms, with no foul play against them,
Can honestly achieve.
Maur. Yes, good my Lord; but choose you well your day:
A moonless Friday luck did never bring
To honest combatant.
Glot. Ha! blessing on thee! I ne'er thought of this:
Now it is clear how our mischance befell.
Be sure thou tell to every one thou meet'st,
Friday and a dark moon suit Theobald.
Ho! Rudigere! hear'st thou not this?
Rud. (*as he goes off, aside to* Maurice.)
Flatter the fool a while and let me go,
I cannot join thee now. [EXIT.
Glot. (*looking after* Rudigere)
Is he so crest-fallen?
Maur. He lacks your noble spirit.
Glot. Fy upon't!

I heed it not. Yet, by my sword and spurs!
'Twas a foul turn, that for my rival earn'd
A branch of victory from Orra's hand.

Maur. Aye, foul indeed! My blood boil'd high to see it.
Look where he proudly comes.

Enter THEOBALD arm'd, with Attendants, having a green sprig stuck in his helmet.

Glot. (*going up to* Theobald.) Comest thou to face me so? Audacious Burgher!
The Lady Orra's favour suits thee not,
Tho' for a time thou hast upon me gain'd
A seeming 'vantage.

Theo. A seeming 'vantage!—Then it is not true,
That thou, unhors'd, layd'st rolling in the dust,
Asking for quarters?—Let me crave thy pardon!
Some strange delusion hung upon our sight
That we believed it so.

Glot. Off with thy taunts!
And pull that sprig from its audacious perch:
The favour of a dame too high for thee.

Theo. Too high indeed; and had'st thou also added,
Too good, too fair, I had assented to it.
Yet, be it known unto your courteous worth,
That were this sprig a Queen's gift, or received
From the brown hand of some poor mountain maid;
Yea, or bestow'd upon my rambling head,
As in the hairy sides of bronzing kid
The wild rose sticks a spray, unprized, unbidden,
I would not give it thee.

Glot. Dost thou so face me out? Then I will have it.
(*Snatching at it with rage.*)

Enter HARTMAN.

Hart. (*separating them*) What! Malice after fighting in the lists
As noble courteous knights!

Glot. (*to* Hartman.) Go, paltry Banneret! Such friends as thou
Become such Lords as he, whose ruined state
Seeks the base fellowship of restless burghers;
Thinking to humble still, with envious spite,
The great and noble houses of the land.
I know ye well, and I defy you both,
With all your damned witchery to-boot.
[EXIT *grumbling, followed by* Maurice, &c.
Manent Theobald *and* Hartman.

Theo. How fierce the creature is, and full of folly!
Like a shent cur to his own door retired,
That bristles up his furious back, and there
Each passenger annoys.—And this is he,
Whom sordid and ambitious Hughobert,
The guardian in the selfish father sunk,
Destines for Orra's husband.—O foul shame!
The carrion-crow and royal eagle join'd,
Make not so cross a match.—But think'st thou, Hartman,
She will submit to it?

Hart. That may be as thou pleasest, Falkenstein.

Theo. Away with mockery!

Hart. I mock thee not.

Theo. Nay, Banneret, thou dost. Saving this favour,
Which every victor in these listed combats
From Ladies' hands receive, nor then regard
As more than due and stated courtesy,
She ne'er hath honour'd me with word or look
Such hope to warrant.

Hart. Wait not thou for looks.

Theo. Thou would'st not have me to a dame like this,
With rich domains and titled rights encompass'd,
These simple limbs, girt in their soldier's gear,
My barren hills and ruin'd tower present,
And say, "Accept—these will I nobly give
In fair exchange for thee and all thy wealth."
No, Rudolph, Hartman, woo the maid thyself,
If thou hast courage for it.

Hart. Yes, Theobald of Falkenstein, I will,
And win her too; but all for thy behoof.
And when I do present, as thou hast said,
Those simple limbs, girt in their soldier's gear,
Adding thy barren hills and ruin'd tower,
With some few items more of gen'rous worth
And native sense and manly fortitude;
I'll give her in return for all that she
Or any maid can in such barter yield,
Its fair and ample worth.

Theo. So dost thou reckon.

Hart. And so will Orra. Do not shake thy head.
I know the maid: for still she has received me
As one who knew her noble father well,
And in the bloody field in which he died
Fought by his side, with kind familiarity·
And her stern guardian, viewing these grey hairs
And this rough visage with no jealous eye,
Hath still admitted it.——— I'll woo her for thee.

Theo. I do in truth believe thou mean'st me well.

Hart. And this is all thou say'st? Cold frozen words!
What has bewitch'd thee, man? Is she not fair?

Theo. O fair indeed as woman need be form'd
To please and be belov'd! Tho', to speak honestly,
I've fairer seen; yet such a form as Orra's
Forever in my busy fancy dwells,
Whene'er I think of wiving my lone state.
It is not this; she has too many lures;
Why wilt thou urge me on to meet her scorn?
I am not worthy of her.

Hart. (*pushing him away with gentle anger.*)
Go to! I praise thy modesty short-while,

And now with dull and senseless perseverance,
Thou would'st o'erlay me with it. Go thy ways!
If thro' thy fault, thus shrinking from the onset,
She with that furious cub be match'd, 'twill rest
Upon thy conscience like a damning sin,
And may it gnaw thee shrewdly! [EXEUNT.

SCENE II.—A SMALL APARTMENT IN THE CASTLE.

Enter RUDIGERE musing gloomily, and muttering to himself some time before he speaks aloud.

Rud. No no; it is to formless air dissolved,
This cherish'd hope, this vision of my brain!
(*Pacing to and fro, and then stopping and musing as before.*)
I daily stood contrasted in her sight
With an ungainly fool; and when she smiled,
Methought———But wherefore still upon this thought,
Which was perhaps but a delusion then,
Brood I with ceaseless torment? Never, never!
O never more on me, from Orra's eye,
Approving glance shall light, or gentle look!
This day's disgrace mars all my goodly dreams.
My path to greatness is at once shut up.
Still in the dust my grov'ling fortune lies.
(*Striking his breast in despair.*)
Tame thine aspiring spirit, luckless wretch!
There is no hope for thee!
And shall I tame it? No, by saints and devils!
The laws have cast me off from every claim
Of house and kindred, and within my veins
Turn'd noble blood to baseness and reproach:
I'll cast them off: why should they be to me
A bar, and no protection? (*Pacing again to and fro, and muttering low for some time before he speaks aloud.*)
Aye; this may still within my toils enthral her:
This is the weakness of her mind, on which
I'll clutch my hold.

Enter CATHRINA behind him, laying her hand upon him.

Cath. Ha! speak'st thou to thyself?
Rud. (*starting.*) I did not speak.
Cath. Thou did'st; thy busy mind gave sound to thoughts
Which thou did'st utter with a quick harsh voice,
Like one who speaks in sleep. Tell me their meaning.
Rud. And dost thou so presume? Be wise; be humble. (*after a pause.*)
Has Orra oft of late requested thee
To tell her stories of the restless dead?
Of spectres rising at the midnight watch
By the lone trav'llers' bed?
Cath. Wherefore of late dost thou so oft inquire
Of what she says and does?
Rud. Be wise, and answer what I ask of thee;
This is thy duty now.
Cath. Alas, alas! I know that one false step
Has o'er me set a stern and ruthless master.
Rud. No, madam; 'tis thy grave and virtuous seeming;
Thy saint-like carriage, rigid and demure,
On which thy high repute so long has stood,
Endowing thee with right of censorship
O'er every simple maid, whose cheerful youth
Wears not so thick a mask, that o'er thee sets
This ruthless master. Hereon rests my power:
I might expose, and therefore I command thee.
Cath. Hush, hush! approaching steps!
They'll find me here!
I'll do whate'er thou wilt.
Rud. It is but Maurice: hie thee to thy closet,
Where I will shortly come to thee. Be thou
My faithful agent in a weighty matter,
On which I now am bent, and I will prove
Thy stay and shelter from the world's contempt.
Cath. Maurice to find me here! Where shall I hide me?
Rud. Nowhere, but boldly pass him as he enters.
I'll find some good excuse; he will be silent;
He is my agent also.
Cath. Dost thou trust him?
Rud. Avarice his master is as shame is thine:
Therefore I trust to deal with both.—Away!

Enter MAURICE, passing CATHRINA as she goes out.

Maur. What, doth the grave and virtuous Cathrina
Vouchsafe to give thee of her company?
Rud. Yes, rigid saint! she has bestowed upon me
Some grave advice to bear with pious meekness
My late discomfiture.
Maur. Aye, and she call'd it,
I could be sworn! heaven's judgment on thy pride.
Rud. E'en so: thou'st guessed it.—Shall we to the ramparts
And meet the western breeze? [EXEUNT.

SCENE III.—A SPACIOUS APARTMENT;

Enter HUGHOBERT and URSTON.

Hugh. (*speaking with angry gesticulation as he enters.*) I feed and clothe these drones, and in return

They cheat, deceive, abuse me; nay, belike,
Laugh in their sleeve the while. By their advice,
This cursed tourney I proclaim'd; for still
They puffed me up with praises of my son—
His grace, his skill in arms, his horsemanship—
Count Falkenstein to him was but a clown—
And so, in Orra's eyes to give him honour,
Full surely did I think—I'll hang them all!
I'll starve them in a dungeon shut from light:
I'll heap my boards no more with dainty fare
To feed false flatterers.

Urst. That indeed were wise:
But art thou sure, when men shall speak the truth,
That thou wilt feed them for it? I but hinted
In gentle words to thee, that Glottenbal
Was praised with partial or affected zeal,
And thou receiv'dst it angrily.

Hugh. Aye, true indeed: but thou did'st speak of him
As one bereft of all capacity.
Now tho', God wot! I look on his defects
With no blind love, and even in my ire
Will sometimes call him fool; yet, nevertheless,
He still has parts and talents, tho' obscured
By some untoward failings.—Heaven be praised!
He wants not strength at least and well turn'd limbs,
Had they but taught him how to use them. Knaves!
They have neglected him.

Enter GLOTTENBAL, who draws back on seeing his Father.

Advance, young Sir: art thou afraid of me?
That thus thou shrinkest like a sculking thief
To make disgrace the more apparent on thee?

Glot. Yes, call it then disgrace, or what you please;
Had not my lance's point somewhat awry
Glanced on his shield———

Hugh. E'en so; I doubt it not;
Thy lances point, and every thing about thee
Hath glanced awry. Go, rid my house, I say,
Of all those feasting flatterers that deceive thee;
They harbour here no more: dismiss them quickly.

Glot. Do it yourself, my Lord; you are, I trow,
Angry enough to do it sharply.

Hugh. (*turning to* Urston) Faith!
He gibes me fairly here; there's reason in't;
Fools speak not thus. (*to* Glottenbal) Go to! if I am angry,
Thou art a graceless son to tell me so.

Glot. Have you not bid me still to speak the truth?

Hugh. (*to* Urston) Again thou hear'st he makes an apt reply.

Urst. He wants not words.

Hugh. Nor meaning neither, Father.

Enter ELEANORA.

Well Dame; where hast thou been?

Elea. I came from Orra.

Hugh. Hast thou been pleading in our son's excuse?
And how did she receive it?

Elea. I tried to do it, but her present humour
Is jest and merriment. She is behind me,
Stopping to stroke a hound, that in the corridor
Came to her fawningly to be carest.

Glot. (*listening.*) Aye she is coming; light and quick her steps;
So sound they, when her spirits are unruly.
But I am bold; she shall not mock me now.

Enter ORRA, tripping gayly, and playing with the folds of her scarf.

Methinks you trip it briskly, gentle Dame.

Or. Does it offend you, noble Knight?

Glot. Go to!
I know your meaning. Wherefore smile you so?

Or. Because, good sooth! with tried and aching sides
I have not power to laugh.

Glot. Full well I know why thou so merry art.
Thou think'st of him to whom thou gav'st that sprig
Of hopeful green, his rusty casque to grace,
Whilst at thy feet his honour'd glave he laid.

Or. Nay, rather say, of him, who at my feet,
From his proud courser's back, more gallantly
Laid his most precious self; then stole away,
Thro' modesty, unthank'd, nor left behind
Of all his gear that flutter'd in the dust,
Or glove or band, or fragment of torn hose,
For dear remembrance-sake, that in my sleeve
I might have stuck it. O! thou wrong'st me much
To think my merriment a ref'rence hath
To any one but him. (*Laughing.*)

Elea. Nay Orra; these wild fits of uncurb'd laughter,
Athwart the gloomy tenor of your mind,
As it has low'r'd of late, so keenly cast,
Unsuited seem and strange.

Or. O nothing strange, my gentle Eleanora!
Did'st thou ne'er see the swallows veering breast,
Winging the air beneath some murky cloud
In the sunn'd glimpse of a stormy day,
Shiver in silv'ry brightness?
Or boatman's oar as vivid lightning flash
In the faint gleam, that like a spirit's path
Tracks the still waters of some sullen lake?
Or lonely Tower, from its brown mass of woods,
Give to the parting of a wintry sun
One hasty glance in mockery of the night
Closing in darkness round it?—Gentle Friend!
Chide not her mirth, who was sad yesterday,

And may be so to-morrow.

Glot. And wherefore art thou sad, unless it is
From thine own wayward humour? Other Dames
Were they so courted, would be gay and happy.

Or. Wayward it needs must be, since I am sad
When such perfection woos me.
Pray good Glottenbal,
How did'st thou learn with such a wond'rous grace
To toss thy armed heels up in the air,
And clutch with out-spread hands the slipp'ry sand?
I was the more amaz'd at thy dexterity,
As this, of all the feats which thou, beforehand,
Did'st promise to perform, most modestly,
Thou did'st forbear to mention.

Glot. Gibe away!
I care not for thy gibing. With fair lists
And no black arts against me———

Hugh. (*advancing angrily from the bottom of the stage to* Glottenbal,) Hold thy peace!
(*To* Orra.) And, Madam, be at least somewhat restrained
In your unruly humour.

Or. Pardon, my Lord: I knew not you were near me.
My humour is unruly: with your leave,
I will retire till I have curb'd it better.
(*To* Eleanora.) I would not lose your company, sweet Countess.

El. We'll go together then.

[Exeunt Orra *and* Eleanora.

(*Manet* Hughobert; *who paces angrily about the stage, while* Glottenbal *stands on the front, thumping his legs with his sheath'd rapier.*)

There is no striving with a forward girl,
Nor pushing on a fool. My harassed life,
Day after day, more irksome grows.—Curs'd bane!
I'll toil no more for this untoward match.

Enter Rudigere, stealing behind and listening.

Rud. You are disturb'd, my Lord.

Hugh. What! is it thou? I am disturbed insooth!

Rud. Aye, Orra has been here, and some light words
Of girlish levity have mov'd you. How!
Toil for this match no more! What else remains,
If this should be abandon'd, noble Aldenberg,
That can be worth your toil?

Hugh. I'll match the cub elsewhere.

Rud. What call ye matching?

Hugh. Surely for him some other virtuous maid
Of high descent, tho' not so richly dowried,
May be obtain'd.

Rud. Within your walls, perhaps,
Some waiting gentle-woman, who perchance
May be some fifty generations back
Descended from a king, he will himself,
Ere long obtain, without your aid, my Lord.

Hugh. Thou mak'st me mad! the dolt! the senseless dolt!
What can I do for him? I cannot force
A noble maid entrusted to my care:
I, the sole guardian of her helpless youth.

Rud. That were indeed unfit: but there are means
To make her yield consent.

Hugh. Then by my faith, good friend, I'll call thee wizard,
If thou can'st find them out. What means already,
Short of compulsion, have we left untried?
And now the term of my authority
Wears to its close.

Rud. I know it well; and therefore powerful means,
And of quick operation, must be sought.

Hugh. Speak plainly to me.

Rud. I have watch'd her long:
I've seen her cheek flush'd with the rosy glow
Of jocund spirits, deadly pale become
At tale of nightly sprite or apparition,
Such as all hear, 'tis true, with greedy ears,
Saying, "Saints save us!" but forget as quickly.
I've mark'd her long: she has, with all her shrewdness
And playful merriment, a gloomy fancy,
That broods within itself on fearful things.

Hugh. And what doth this avail us?

Rud. Hear me out.
Your ancient castle in the Suabian forest
Hath, as too well you know, belonging to it,
Or false or true, frightful reports. There hold her
Strictly confined in sombre banishment;
And doubt not but she will, ere long, full gladly
Her freedom purchase at the price you name.

Hugh. On what pretence can I confine her there?
It were most odious.

Rud. Can pretence be wanting?
Has she not favour shewn to Theobald,
Who in your neighbourhood, with his sworn friend
The Banneret of Basle, suspiciously
Prolongs his stay? A poor and paltry Count,
Unmeet to match with her. And want ye then
A reason for removing her with speed
To some remoter quarter? Out upon it!
You are too scrupulous.

Hugh. Thy scheme is good, but cruel.

(Glottenbal—*who has been drawing nearer to them, and attending to the last part of their discourse.*)

Glot. O much I like it, dearly wicked Rudigere!
She then will turn her mind to other thoughts
Than scornful gibe at me.

Hugh. I to her father swore I would protect her:

I would fulfill his will.
Rud. And, in that will, her father did desire
She might be match'd with this your only son;
Therefore you're firmly bound all means to use
That may the end attain.
Hugh. Walk forth with me; we'll talk of this at large.
[Exeunt Hugh. *and* Rud.
(*Manet* Glottenbal, *who comes forward from the bottom of the stage with the action of a knight advancing to the charge.*)
Yes, thus it is: I have the slight o't now:
And were the combat yet to come, I'd shew them
I'm not a whit behind the bravest knight,
Cross luck excepted.

Enter Maurice.

Maur. My Lord, indulge us of your courtesy.
Glot. In what, I pray?
Maur. Did not Fernando tell you?
We are all met within our social bower;
And I have wager'd on your head, that none
But you alone, within the Count's domains,
Can to the bottom drain the chased horn.
Come; do not linger here when glory calls you.
Glot. Think'st thou that Theobald could drink so stoutly?
Maur. He, paltry chief! he herds with sober burghers;
A goblet, half its size, would conquer him.
[Exeunt.

ACT II.

Scene 1.—A garden with trees and shrubs, &c. Orra, Theobald, and Hartman are discovered in a shaded walk at the bottom of the stage, speaking in dumb show, which they cross, disappearing behind the trees, and are presently followed by Cathrina and Alice, who continue walking there: Orra, Theobald, and Hartman then appear again, entering near the front of the stage.

Or. (*talking to* Hart *as she enters.*) And so, since fate has made me, woe the day!
That poor and good-for-nothing, helpless being,
Woman yclept, I must consign myself
With all my lands and rights into the hands
Of some proud man, and say, "Take all, I pray,
And do me in return the grace and favour
To be my master."
Hart. Nay, gentle lady! you constrain my words,
And load them with a meaning harsh and foreign
To what they truly bear.—A master! No:
A valiant gentle mate, who in the field
Or in the council will maintain your right:
A noble, equal partner.
Or. (*shaking her head.*) Well I know
in such a partnership, the share of power
Allotted to the wife. See; noble Falkenstein
Hath silent been the while, nor spoke one word
In aid of all your specious arguments.
What's your advice, my Lord? (*to* Theo.)
Theo. Ah, noble Orra!
'Twere like self-murder to give honest counsel:
Then urge me not.—I frankly do confess
I should be more heroic than I am.
Or. Right well I see thy head approves my plan,
And by and by, so will thy gen'rous heart.
In short, I would, without another's leave,
Improve the low condition of my peasants,
And cherish them in peace. Ev'n now methinks
Each little cottage of my native vale
Swells out its earthen sides, up-heaves its roof,
Like to a hillock mov'd by lab'ring mole,
And with green trail-weeds clambring up its walls,
Roses and ev'ry gay and fragrant plant,
Before my fancy stands, a fairy bower.
Aye, and within it too do fairies dwell.
(*Looking playfully thro' her fingers like a shew-glass.*)
Peep thro' its wreathed window, if indeed
The flowers grow not too close; and there within
Thou'lt see some half a dozen rosy brats,
Eating from wooden bowls their dainty milk;—
Those are my mountain elves. See'st thou not
Their very forms distinctly?
Theo. O most distinctly! And most beautiful
The sight! Which sweetly stirreth in the heart
Feelings that gladden and ennoble it,
Dancing like sun-beams on the rippled sea:
A blessed picture! Foul befall the man,
Whose narrow selfish soul would shade or mar it!
Hart. To this right heartily I say Amen!
But if there be a man, whose gen'rous soul (*turning to* Orra.)
Like ardour fills; who would with thee pursue
Thy gen'rous plan; who would his harness don—
Or. (*putting her hand on him, in gentle interruption.*) Nay, valiant Banneret, who would, an' please you,
His harness doff: all feuds, all strife forbear,
All military rivalship, all lust
Of added power, and live in steady quietness

A mild and fost'ring Lord. Know you of one
That would so share my task?—You answer not.
And your brave friend methinks casts on the ground
A thoughtful look; wots he of such a Lord? *(to Theo.)*

Theo. Wot I of such a Lord!—No, noble Orra,
I do not, nor does Hartman, tho' perhaps
His friendship may betray his judgment. No;
None such exist; we are all fierce, contentious,
Restless and proud, and prone to vengeful feuds;
The very distant sound of war excites us,
Like coursers list'ning to the chase, who paw
And fret and bite the curbing rein. Trust none
To cross thy gentle, but most princely purpose,
Who hath on head a circling helmet wore,
Or ever grasp'd a glave.—But ne'ertheless
There is—I know a man.—Might I be bold?

Or. Being so honest, boldness is your right.

Theo. Permitted then, I'll say, I know a man,
Tho' most unworthy Orra's Lord to be,
Who, as her champion, friend, devoted soldier,
Might yet commend himself; and, so received,
Who would at her command, for her defence
His sword right proudly draw. An honour'd sword,
Like that which at the gate of Paradise
From steps profane the blessed region guarded.

Or. Thanks to the gen'rous knight! I also know
The man thou would'st commend; and when my state
Such service needeth, to no sword but his
Will I that service owe.

Theo. Most noble Orra! greatly is he honour'd;
And will not murmur that a higher wish,
Too high, and too presumptuous, is represt.
(Kissing her hand with great respect)

Or. Nay, Rodolph Hartman, clear that cloudy brow,
And look on Falkenstein and on myself,
As two co-burghers of thy native city,
(For such I mean ere long to be,) and claiming
From thee, as cadets from an elder born,
Thy cheering equal kindness.

Enter a Servant.

Ser. The Count is now at leisure to receive
The Lord of Falkenstein, and Rodolph Hartman.

Hart. We shall attend him shortly.
[Exit Servant.
(Aside to Theo.)—Must we now
Our purpos'd suit, to some pretended matter
Of slighter import change?

Theo. (*to* Hart. *aside.*) Assuredly.—
Madam, I take my leave with all devotion.

Hart. I with all friendly wishes.
[Exeunt Theo. and Hart.

(Cathrina *and* Alice *now advance through the shrubs, &c. at the bottom of the stage, while* Orra *remains, wrapped in thought, on the front.*)

Cath. Madam, you 're thoughtful; something occupies
Your busy mind.

Or. What was't we talk'd of, when the worthy Banneret
With Falkenstein upon our converse broke?

Cath. How we should spend our time, when in your castle
You shall your state maintain in ancient splendour,
With all your vassals round you.

Or. Aye, so it was.

Al. And you did say, my Lady,
It should not be a cold unsocial grandeur:
That you would keep, the while, a merry house.

Or. O doubt it not! I'll gather round my board
All that heav'n sends to me of way-worn folks,
And noble travellers, and neighb'ring friends,
Both young and old. Within my ample hall,
The worn-out man of arms, (of whom too many,
Nobly descended, rove like reckless vagrants
From one proud chieftain's castle to another,
Half chid, half honour'd,) shall o'tip-toe tread,
Tossing his grey locks from his wrinkled brow
With cheerful freedom, as he boasts his feats
Of days gone by.—Music we'll have; and oft
The bick'ring dance upon our oaken floors
Shall, thund'ring loud, strike on the distant ear
Of 'nighted trav'llers, who shall gladly bend
Their doubtful footsteps tow'rds the cheering din.
Solemn, and grave, and cloister'd, and demure
We shall not be. Will this content ye, damsels?

Al. O passing well! 'twill be a pleasant life;
Free from all stern subjection; blithe and fanciful;
We'll do whate'er we list.

Cath. That right and prudent is, I hope thou meanest.

Al. Why ever so suspicious and so strict?
How could'st thou think I had another meaning?
(*To* Orra.) And shall we ramble in the woods full oft
With hound and horn?—that is my dearest joy.

Or. Thou runn'st me fast, good Alice. Do not doubt
This shall be wanting to us. Ev'ry season
Shall have its suited pastime: even Winter
In its deep noon, when mountains piled with snow,
And chok'd up valleys from our mansion bar

All entrance, and nor guest nor traveller
Sounds at our gate; the empty hall forsaking,
In some warm chamber, by the crackling fire,
We'll hold our little, snug, domestic court,
Plying our work with song and tale between.

Cath. And stories too, I ween, of ghosts and spirits,
And things unearthly, that on Michael's eve
Rise from the yawning tombs.

Or. Thou thinkest then one night o' th' year is truly
More horrid than the rest.

Cath. Perhaps 'tis only silly superstition:
But yet it is well known the Count's brave father
Would rather on a glacier's point have lain,
By angry tempests rock'd, than on that night
Sunk in a downy couch in Brunier's castle.

Or. How, pray? What fearful thing did scare him so?

Cath. Hast thou ne'er heard the story of Count Hugo,
His ancester, who slew the hunter-knight?

Or. (*eagerly.*) Tell it I pray thee.

Al. Cathrina, tell it not: it is not right:
Such stories ever change her cheerful spirits
To gloomy pensiveness; her rosy bloom
To the wan colour of a shrouded corse.
(*To* Orra.) What pleasure is there, Lady, when thy hand,
Cold as the valley's ice, with hasty grasp
Seizes on her who speaks, while thy shrunk form
Cow'ring and shiv'ring stands with keen turn'd ear
To catch what follows of the pausing tale?

Or. And let me cow'ring stand, and be my touch
The valley's ice: there is a pleasure in it.

Al. Say'st thou indeed there is a pleasure in it?

Or. Yea, when the cold blood shoots through every vein:
When every hair's-pit on my shrunken skin
A knotted knoll becomes, and to mine ears
Strange inward sounds awake, and to mine eyes
Rush stranger tears, there is a joy in fear.
(*Catching hold of Cathrina.*)
Tell it, Cathrina, for the life within me
Beats thick, and stirs to hear it.
He slew the hunter-knight?

Cath. Since I must tell it, then, the story goes
That grim Count Wallenberg, the ancestor
Of Hughobert and also of yourself,
From hatred or from envy, did decoy
A noble knight, who hunted in the forest,
Well the Black Forest named, into his castle,
And there, within his chamber, murder'd him—

Or. Merciful Heaven! and in my veins there runs
A murderer's blood. Said'st thou not, *murder'd him?*

Cath. Aye; as he lay asleep, at dead of night.

Or. A deed most horrible!

Cath. It was on Michael's eve; and since that time,
The neighb'ring hinds oft hear the midnight yell
Of spectre-hounds, and see the spectre shapes
Of huntsmen on their sable steeds, with still
A nobler hunter riding in their van
To cheer the desp'rate chace, by moonlight shewn,
When wanes its horn, in long October nights.

Or. This hath been often seen?

Cath. Aye, so they say.
But, as the story goes, on Michael's eve,
And on that night alone of all the year,
The hunter-knight himself, having a horn
Thrice sounded at the gates, the castle enters;
And, in the very chamber where he died,
Calls on his murd'rer, or in his default
Some true descendant of his house, to loose
His spirit from its torment; for his body
Is laid i' the earth unbless'd, and none can tell
The spot of its interment.

Or. Call on some true descendant of his race!
It were to such a fearful interview.
But in that chamber, on that night alone——
Hath he elsewhere to any of the race
Appear'd? or hath he power———

Al. Nay, nay, forbear:
See how she looks. (*To* Orra.) I fear thou art not well.

Or. There is a sickly faintness come upon me.

Al. And did'st thou say there is a joy in fear?

Or. My mind of late has strange impressions ta'en.
I know not how it is.

Al. A few nights since,
Stealing o'tiptoe, softly thro' your chamber,
Towards my own———

Or. O Heaven defend us! did'st thou see aught there?

Al. Only your sleeping self. But you appear'd
Distress'd and troubled in your dreams; and once
I thought to wake you ere I left the chamber,
But I forbore.

Or. And glad I am thou did'st.
It is not dreams I fear; for still with me
There is an indistinctness o'er them cast,
Like the dull gloom of misty twilight, where
Before mine eyes pass all incongruous things,
Huge, horrible and strange, on which I stare
As idiots do upon this changeful world
With nor surprise nor speculation. No;
Dreams I fear not: it is the dreadful waking,
When in deep midnight stillness, the roused fancy
Takes up th' imperfect shadows of its sleep,

Like a marr'd speech snatch'd from a bungler's mouth,
Shaping their forms distinctively and vivid
To visions horrible:—this is my bane;—
It is the dreadful waking that I fear.

Al. Well, speak of other things. There in good time
Your ghostly father comes with quicken'd steps,
Like one who bears some tidings good or ill.
Heaven grant they may be good!

Enter URSTON.

Or. Father, you seem disturb'd.

Urst. Daughter, I am in truth disturb'd. The Count
Has o'the sudden, being much enraged
That Falkenstein still lingers near these walls,
Resolv'd to send thee hence, to be a while
In banishment detained, till on his son
Thou look'st with better favour.

Or. Aye, indeed!
That is to say perpetual banishment:
A sentence light or heavy, as the place
Is sweet or irksome he would send me to.

Urst. He will contrive to make it, doubt him not,
Irksome enough. Therefore I would advise thee
To feign at least, but for a little time,
A disposition to obey his wishes.
He's stern, but not relentless; and his dame,
The gentle Eleanor, will still befriend you,
When fit occasion serves.

Or. What said'st thou, Father?
To feign a disposition to obey!
I did mistake thy words.

Urst. No, gentle daughter;
So press'd, thou mayest feign and yet be blameless.
A trusty guardian's faith with thee he holds not,
And therefore thou art free to meet his wrongs
With what defence thou hast.

Or. (*proudly.*) Nay, pardon me; I, with an unshorn crown,
Must hold the truth in plain simplicity,
And am in nice distinctions most unskilful.

Urst. Lady, have I deserv'd this sharpness? Oft
Thine infant hand has strok'd this shaven crown:
Thou'st ne'er till now reproach'd it.

Or. (*bursting into tears.*) Pardon, O pardon me, my gentle Urston!
Pardon a wayward child, whose eager temper
Doth sometimes mar the kindness of her heart.
Father, am I forgiven? (*Hanging on him.*)

Urst. Thou art, thou art:
Thou art forgiven; more than forgiven, my child.

Or. Then lead me to the Count, I will myself
Learn his stern purpose.

Urst. In the hall he is,
Seated in state, and waiting to receive you.

[EXEUNT.

SCENE III.—A SPACIOUS APARTMENT, OR BARON'S HALL, WITH A CHAIR OF STATE.

HUGHOBERT, ELEANORA, and GLOTTENBAL enter near the Front, speaking as they enter; and afterwards enter Vassels and Attendants, who range themselves at the bottom of the Stage.

Hugh. Cease, Dame! I will not hear; thou striv'st in vain
With thy weak pleadings. Orra hence must go
Within the hour, unless she will engage
Her plighted word to marry Glottenbal.

Glot. Aye, and a mighty hardship, by the mass!

Hugh. I've summon'd her in solemn form before me,
That these my vassals should my act approve,
Knowing my right of guardianship; and also
That her late father, in his dying moments,
Did will she should be married to my son;
Which will, she now must promise to obey,
Or take the consequence.

El. But why so hasty?

Hugh. Why, say'st thou? Falkenstein still in these parts
Lingers with sly intent. Even now he left me,
After an interview of small importance,
Which he and Hartman, as a blind pretence
For seeing Orra, formally requested.
I say again she must forthwith obey me,
Or take the consequence of wayward will.

El. Nay, not for Orra do I now entreat
So much as for thyself. Bethink thee well
What honour thou shalt have, when it is known
Thy ward from thy protecting roof was sent;
Thou who should'st be to her a friend, a father.

Hugh. But do I send her unprotected? No!
Brave Rudigere conducts her with a band
Of trusty spearmen. In her new abode
She will be safe as here.

El. Ha! Rudigere!
Put'st thou such trust in him? Alas, my Lord!
His heart is full of cunning and deceit.
Wilt thou to him the flower of all thy race
Rashly intrust? O be advised, my Lord!

Hugh. Thy ghostly father tells thee so, I doubt not.
Another priest confesses Rudigere,
And Urston likes him not. But canst thou think,
With aught but honest purpose, he would choose
From all her women the severe Cathrina,
So strictly virtuous, for her companion?
This puts all doubt to silence. Say no more,

Else I shall think thou plead'st against my son,
More with a step-dame's than a mother's feelings.

Glot. Aye, marry does she father! And forsooth,
Regards me as a fool. No marvel then
That Orra scorns me: being taught by her,—
How should she else?—So to consider me.

Hugh. (*to* Glottenbal.) Tut! hold thy tongue.

El. He wrongs me much, my Lord.

Hugh. No more, for here she comes.

Enter ORRA, attended by URSTON, ALICE and CATHRINA; and HUGHOBERT seats himself in his chair of state, the Vassals, &c. ranging themselves on each side.

Hugh. (*to* Orra.) Madam and ward, placed under mine authority,
And to my charge committed by my kinsman,
Ulric of Aldenberg, thy noble father;
Having all gentle means essay'd to win thee
To the fulfilment of his dying will,
That did decree his heiress should be married
With Glottenbal my heir; I solemnly
Now call upon thee, ere that rougher means
Be used for this good end, to promise truly,
Thou wilt, within a short and stated time,
Before the altar give thy plighted faith
To this my only son. I wait thine answer.
Orra of Aldenberg, wilt thou do this?

Or. Count of the same, my lord and guardian,
I will not.

Hugh. Have a care, thou froward maid!
'Tis thy last opportunity: ere long
Thou shalt, within a dreary dwelling pent,
Count thy dull hours, told by the dead man's watch,
And wish thou had'st not been so proudly wilful.

Or. And let my dull hours by the dead man's watch
Be told; yea, make me too the dead man's mate,
My dwelling place the nailed coffin; still
I would prefer it to the living Lord
Your goodness offers me.

Hugh. Art thou bewitch'd?
Is he not young, well featured and well form'd?
And dost thou put him in thy estimation
With bones and sheeted clay?
Beyond endurance is thy stubborn spirit.
Right well thy father knew that all thy sex
Stubborn and headstrong are; therefore, in wisdom,
He vested me with power that might compel thee
To what he will'd should be.

Or. O not in wisdom!
Say rather in that weak, but gen'rous faith,
Which said to him, the cope of heaven would fall
And smother in its cradle his swath'd babe,
Rather than thou, his mate in arms, his kinsman,
Who by his side in many a field had fought,
Should'st take advantage of his confidence
For sordid ends—
My brave and noble father!
A voice comes from thy grave and cries against it,
And bids me to be bold. Thine awful form
Rises before me,—and that look of anguish
On thy dark brow!—O no! I blame thee not.

Hugh. Thou seem'st beside thyself with such wild gestures
And strangely-flashing eyes. Repress these fancies,
And to plain reason listen. Thou hast said,
For sordid ends I have advantage ta'en.
Since thy brave father's death, by war and compact,
Thou of thy lands hast lost a third; whilst I,
By happy fortune, in my heir's behalf,
Have doubled my domains to what they were
When Ulric chose him as a match for thee.

Or. O, and what speaketh this, but that my father
Domains regarded not; and thought a man,
Such as the son should be of such a man
As thou to him appear'dst, a match more honourable
Than one of ampler state. Take thou from Glottenbal
The largely added lands of which thou boastest,
And put, in lieu thereof into his stores
Some weight of manly sense and gen'rous worth,
And I will say thou keep'st faith with thy friend:
But as it is, did'st thou unto thy wealth
A kingdom add, thou poorly would'st deceive him.

Hugh. (*Rising from his chair in anger.*)
Now, Madam, be all counsel on this matter
Between us closed. Prepare thee for thy journey.

El. Nay, good my Lord! consider.

Hugh. (*to* Eleanora.) What, again!
Have I not said thou hast an alien's heart
From me and mine. Learn to respect my will
In silence, as becomes a youthful Dame.

Urst. For a few days may she not still remain?

Hugh. No, priest; not for an hour. It is my pleasure
That she for Brunier's castle do set forth
Without delay.

Or. (*with a faint starting movement.*) In Brunier's castle!

Hugh. Aye;
And doth this change the colour of thy cheek,
And give thy alter'd voice a feebler sound?
(*aside to* Glottenbal.)

She shrinks, now to her, boy; this is thy time.

Glot. (*to* Orra.) Unless thou wilt, thou need'st not go at all.
There is full many a maiden would right gladly
Accept the terms we offer, and remain.
(*A pause.*) Wilt thou not answer me?

Or. I did not hear thee speak.—I heard thy voice,
But not thy words: What said'st thou?

Glot. I say there's many a maiden would right gladly
Accept the terms we offer, and remain.
The daughter of a king hath match'd ere now
With mine inferior. We are link'd together
As 'twere by right and natural property.
And as I've said before I say again,
I love thee too: What more could'st thou desire?

Or. I thank thee for thy courtship, tho' uncouth;
For it confirms my purpose; and my strength
Grows as thou speak'st, firm like the deep-bas'd rock.
(*to* Hughobert.) Now for my journey when you will, my Lord;
I'm ready.

Hugh. Be it so! on thine own head
Rest all the blame. (*Going from her.*)
Perverse past all relief!
(*Turning round to her sternly.*)
Orra of Aldenberg, wilt thou obey me?

Or. Count of that noble house, with all respect,
Again I say I will not.

[Exit Hughobert *in anger, followed by* Glottenbal, Urston, *&c.* *Manent only* Eleanora, Cathrina, Alice *and* Orra, *who keeps up with stately pride till* Hughobert, *and all Attendants are gone out, and then throwing herself into the arms of* Eleanora, *gives vent to her feelings.*)

El. Sweet Orra! be not so depress'd; thou goest
For a short term, soon to return again;
The banishment is mine who stays behind,
But I will beg of Heaven with ceaseless prayers
To have thee soon restored: and, when I dare,
Will plead with Hughobert in thy behalf;
He is not always stern.

Or. Thanks, gentle friend! Thy voice to me doth sound
Like the last sounds of kindly nature; dearly
In my remembrance shall they rest.—What sounds,
What sights, what horrid intercourse I may,
Ere we shall meet again, be doom'd to prove,
High Heaven alone doth know. If that indeed
We e'er shall meet again! (*Falls on her neck and weeps.*)

El. Nay, nay! come to my chamber. There awhile
Compose your spirits. Be not so deprest.
[Exeunt.

(Rudigere, *who has appear'd, during the last part of the above scene, at the bottom of the stage, half concealed, as if upon the watch, now comes forward.*)
(*Speaking as he advances.*) Hold firm her pride till fairly from these walls
Our journey is begun; then fortune hail!
Thy favours are secured. (*Looking off the stage.*)
Ho, Maurice there!

Enter Maurice.

My faithful Maurice, I would speak with thee.
I leave thee here behind me; to thy care,
My int'rests I commit; be it thy charge
To counteract thy Lady's influence,
Who will entreat her Lord the term to shorten
Of Orra's absence, maiming thus my plan,
Which must, belike, have time to be effected.
Be vigilant, be artful; and be sure
Thy services I amply will repay.

Maur. Aye, thou hast said so, and I have believed thee.

Rud. And dost thou doubt?

Maur. No; yet mean time, good sooth!
If somewhat of thy bounty I might finger,
'Twere well: I like to have some actual proof.
Did'st thou not promise it?

Rud. 'Tis true I did,
But other pressing calls have drain'd my means.

Maur. And other pressing calls within my mind,
May make my faith to falter.

Rud. Go to! I know thou art a greedy leech,
Tho' ne'ertheless thou lov'st me. (*Taking a small case from his pocket, which he opens.*)
See'st thou here?
I have no coin; but look upon these jewels:
I took them from a knight I slew in battle.
When I am Orra's lord, thou shalt receive,
Were it ten thousand crowns, whate'er their worth
Shall by a skilful lapidary be
In honesty esteem'd. (*Gives him the jewels.*)

Maur. I thank thee, but methinks their lustre's dim.
I've seen the stones before upon thy breast,
In gala days, but never heard thee boast
They were of so much value.

Rud. I was too prudent: I had lost them else.
To no one but thyself would I entrust
The secret of their value.

Enter Servant.

Ser. Sir Rudigere, the spearmen are without,

Waiting your further orders, for the journey.
Rud. (*to* Servant.) I'll come to them anon.
[Exit Servant.
Before I go, I'll speak to thee again.
[Exeunt *severally*.

ACT III.

Scene I.—A forest with a half-ruined castle in the back ground, seen through the trees by moonlight. Franko and several outlaws are discovered sitting on the ground, round a fire, with flaggons, &c. by them, as if they had been drinking.

SONG *of several voices.*

The cough and crow to roost are gone,
The owl sits on the tree,
The hush'd wind wails with feeble moan,
Like infant charity.

The wild-fire dances on the fen,
The red star sheds its ray,
Up-rouse ye, then, my merry men!
It is our op'ning day.

Both child and nurse are fast asleep,
And clos'd is every flower,
And winking tapers faintly peep
High from my Lady's bower;

Bewilder'd hinds with shorten'd ken
Shrink on their murky way,
Up-rouse ye, then, my merry men!
It is our op'ning day.

Nor board nor garner own we now,
Nor roof nor latched door,
Nor kind mate, bound by holy vow
To bless a good man's store;

Noon lulls us in a gloomy den,
And night is grown our day,
Up-rouse ye, then, my merry men!
And use it as ye may.

Frank. (*to* 1*st* Out.) How lik'st thou this, Fernando?
1*st Out.* Well sung i'faith! but serving ill our turn,
Who would all trav'llers and benighted folks
Scare from our precincts. Such sweet harmony
Will rather tempt invasion.
Frank. Fear not, for mingled voices, heard afar,
Thro' glade and glen and thicket, stealing on
To distant list'ners, seem wild-goblin-sounds;
At which the lonely trav'ller checks his steed,
Pausing with long-drawn breath and keen-turn'd ear;
And twilight pilferers cast down in haste
Their ill-got burthens, while the homeward hind
Turns from his path, full many a mile about,
Thro' bog and mire to grope his blund'ring way.
Such, to the startled ear of superstition,
Were seraph's song, could we like seraphs sing.

Enter 1st Outlaw hastily.

2*d Out.* Disperse ye different ways: we are undone.
Frank. How say'st thou, shrinking poltron? we undone.
Outlaw'd and ruin'd men, who live by daring!
2*d Out.* A train of armed men, some noble Dame
Escorting, (so their scatter'd words discover'd
As unperceived I hung upon their rear,)
Are close at hand, and mean to pass the night
Within the castle.
Frank. Some benighted travellers,
Bold from their numbers, or who ne'er have heard
The ghostly legend of this dreaded place.
1*st Out.* Let us keep close within our vaulted haunts;
The way to which is tangled and perplex'd,
And cannot be discover'd: with the morn
They will depart.
Frank. Nay, by the holy mass! within those walls
Not for a night must trav'llers quietly rest,
Or few or many. Would we live securely,
We must uphold the terrors of the place:
Therefore, let us prepare our midnight rouse.
See, from the windows of the castle gleam
(*lights seen from the castle.*)
Quick passing lights, as tho' they moved within
In hurried preparation; and that bell,
(*bell heard.*)
Which from yon turret its shrill 'larum sends,
Betokens some unwonted stir. Come, hearts!
Be all prepared, before the midnight watch,
The fiend-like din of our infernal chace
Around the walls to raise.—Come; night advances. [Exeunt.

Scene II.—A gothic room in the castle, with the stage darkened.

Enter Cathrina, bearing a light, followed by Orra.

Or. (*Catching her by the robe and pulling her back.*) Advance no further: turn I pray! This room
More dismal and more ghastly seems than that
Which we have left behind. Thy taper's light,
As thus aloft thou wav'st it to and fro,
The fretted cieling gilds with feeble brightness,
Whilst over-head its carved ribs glid past
Like edgy waves of a dark sea, returning
To an eclipsed moon its sullen sheen.

Cath. To me it seems less dismal than the other.
See, here are chairs around the table set,
As if its last inhabitants had left it
Scarcely an hour ago.
(*Setting the light upon the table.*)
Or. Alas! how many hours and years have past
Since human forms have round this table sat,
Or lamp or taper on its surface gleam'd!
Methinks I hear the sound of time long past
Still murm'ring o'er us in the lofty void
Of those dark arches, like the ling'ring voices
Of those who long within their graves have slept.
It was their gloomy home; now it is mine.
(*Sits down, resting her arm upon the table and covering her eyes with her hand.*)

Enter Rudigere, beckoning Cathrina to come to him; and speaks to her in a low voice at the corner of the stage.

Go and prepare thy Lady's chamber; why
Dost thou forever closely near her keep?
Cath. She charged me so to do:
Rud. I charge thee also,
With paramount authority, to leave her:
I for a while will take thy station here.
Thou art not mad? Thou dost not hesitate?
(*Fixing his eyes on her with a fierce threatening look, from which she shrinks.*)
[Exit Cath.
Or. This was the home of bloody lawless power:
The very air rests thick and heavily
Where murder hath been done.
(*Sighing heavily.*) There is a strange oppression in my breast:
Dost thou not feel a close unwholesome vapour?
Rud. No; ev'ry air to me is light and healthful,
That with thy sweet and heavenly breath is mix'd.
Or. (*Starting up.*) Thou here?
(*Looking round.*) Cathrina gone?
Rud. Does Orra fear to be alone with one,
Whose weal, whose being on her favour hangs?
Or. Retire, Sir Knight. I choose to be alone.
Rud. And dost thou choose it, wearing now so near
The midnight hour, in such a place?—Alas!
How loath'd and irksome must my presence be!
Or. Dost thou not deride my weakness?
Rud. I deride it!
No, noble Maid! say rather that from thee
I have a kindred weakness caught. In battle
My courage never shrunk, as my arm'd heel
And crested helm do fairly testify:
But now when midnight comes, I feel by sympathy,
With thinking upon thee, fears rise within me
I never knew before.
Or. (*in a softened kindlier voice.*) Ha! dost thou too
Such human weakness own?
Rud. I plainly feel
We are all creatures, in the wakeful hour
Of ghastly midnight, form'd to cower together,
Forgetting all distinctions of the day,
Beneath its awful and mysterious power.
(*Stealing closer to her as he speaks, and putting his arms round her.*)
Or. (*breaking from him.*) I pray thee hold thy parley further off:
Why dost thou press so near me?
Rud. And art thou so offended, lovely Orra?
Ah! wherefore am I thus presumptuous deem'd?
The blood that fills thy veins enriches mine;
From the same stock we spring; tho' by that glance
Of thy disdainful eye, too well I see
My birth erroneously thou countest base.
Or. Erroneously!
Rud. Yes, I will prove it so.
Longer I'll not endure a galling wrong
Which makes each word of tenderness that bursts
From a full heart, bold and presumptuous seem,
And severs us so far.
Or. No, subtile snake!
It is the baseness of thy selfish mind,
Full of all guile, and cunning, and deceit,
That severs us so far, and shall do ever.
Rud. Thou prov'st how far my passion will endure
Unjust reproaches from a mouth so dear.
Or. Out on hypocrisy! who but thyself
Did Hughobert advise to send me hither?
And who the jailor's hateful office holds
To make my thraldom sure?
Rud. Upbraid me not for this: had I refused,
One less thy friend had ta'en th' ungracious task.
And, gentle Orra! dost thou know a man,
Who might in ward all that his soul holds dear
From danger keep, yet would the charge refuse,
For that strict right such wardship doth condemn?
O! still to be with thee; to look upon thee;
To hear thy voice, makes ev'n this place of horrors,—
Where, as 'tis said, the spectre of a chief,
Slain by our common grandsire, haunts the night,
A paradise—a place where I could live
In penury and gloom, and be most bless'd.
Ah! Orra! if there's misery in thraldom,
Pity a wretch who breathes but in thy favour:
Who, till he look'd upon that beauteous face,
Was free and happy.—Pity me or kill me!
(*Kneeling and catching hold of her hand.*)

Or. Off, fiend! let snakes and vipers cling to me,
So thou dost keep aloof.

Rud. (*rising indignantly*.) And is my love with so much hatred met?
Madam, beware lest scorn like this should change me
Ev'n to the baleful thing your fears have fancied.

Or. Dar'st thou to threaten me?

Rud. He, who is mad with love and gall'd with scorn,
Dares any thing.—But O! forgive such words
From one who rather, humbled at your feet,
Would of that gentleness, that gen'rous pity,
The native inmate of each female breast,
Receive the grace on which his life depends.
There was a time when thou did'st look on me
With other eyes.

Or. Thou dost amaze me much.
Whilst I believed thou wert an honest man,
Being no fool, and an adventurous soldier,
I look'd upon thee with good-will; if more
Thou did'st discover in my looks than this,
Thy wisdom with thine honesty, in truth
Was fairly match'd.

Rud. Madam, the proud derision of that smile
Deceives me not. It is the Lord of Falkenstein,
Who, better skill'd than I in tournay-war,
Tho' not i' th' actual field more valiant found,
Engrosses now your partial thoughts. And yet
What may he boast which in a lover's suit,
I may not urge? He's brave, and so am I.
In birth I am his equal; for my mother,
As I shall prove, was married to Count Albert,
My noble father, tho' for reasons tedious
Here to be stated, still their secret nuptials
Were unacknowledged, and on me hath fallen
A cruel stigma which degrades my fortunes.
But were I—O forgive th' aspiring thought!—
But were I Orra's Lord; I should break forth
Like the unclouded sun, by all acknowledged
As ranking with the highest in the land.

Or. Do what thou wilt when thou art Orra's Lord;
But being as thou art, retire and leave me:
I choose to be alone. (*Very proudly*.)

Rud. Then be it so.
Thy pleasure, mighty Dame, I will not balk.
This night, to-morrow's night, and every night,
Shalt thou in solitude be left; if absence
Of human beings can secure it for thee.
(*Pauses and looks on her, while she seems struck and disturb'd*.)
It wears already on the midnight hour;
Good night! (*Pauses again, she still more disturbed*.)
Perhaps I understood too hastily
Commands you may retract.

Or. (*recovering her state*.) Leave me, I say; that part of my commands
I never can retract.

Rud. You are obeyed. [Exit.

(*Or*. *paces up and down hastily for some time, then stops short, and after remaining a little while in a thoughtful posture*.) Can spirit from the tomb, or fiend from hell,
More hateful, more malignant be than man—
Than villainous man? Altho' to look on such,
Yea, even the very thought of looking on them,
Makes natural blood to curdle in the veins
And loosen'd limbs to shake.
There are who have endured the visitation
Of supernatural Beings.—O forfend it!
I would close couch me to my deadliest foe,
Rather than for a moment bear alone
The horrors of the sight.
Who's there? Who's there? (*looking round*.)
Heard I not voices near? That door ajar
Sends forth a cheerful light. Perhaps, Cathrina,
Who now prepares my chamber. Grant it be! [Exit, *running hastily to a door from which a light is seen*.

Scene III.—A chamber, with a small bed or couch in it.

Enter Rudigere and Cathrina, wrangling together.

Rud. I say begone, and occupy the chamber
I have appointed for thee: here I'm fix'd
To pass the night.

Cath. Did'st thou not say my chamber
Should be adjoining that which Orra holds?
I know thy wicked thoughts: they meditate
Some dev'lish scheme: but think not I'll abet it.

Rud. Thou wilt not!—angry, restive, simple fool!
Dost thou stop short, and say "I'll go no further?"
Thou, whom concealed shame hath bound so fast,—
My tool,—my instrument?—Fulfil thy charge
To the full bent of thy commission, else
Thee, and thy bantling too, I'll from me cast
To want and infamy.

Cath. O shameless man!
Thou art the son of a degraded mother
As low as I am, yet thou hast no pity.

Rud. Aye, and dost thou reproach my bastardy
To make more base the man who conquer'd thee,
With all thy virtue, rigid and demure?
Who would have thought less than a sov'reign Prince
Could e'er have compass'd such achievement? Mean
As he may be, thou'st given thyself a master,

And must obey him.—Dost thou yet resist?
Thou know'st my meaning. (*Tearing open his vest in vehemence of action.*)

Cath. Under thy vest a dagger!—Ah too well,
I know thy meaning, cruel, ruthless man!

Rud. Have I discover'd it?—I thought not of it:
The vehemence of gesture hath betray'd me.
I keep it not for thee, but for myself;
A refuge from disgrace. Here is another
He who with high but dangerous fortune grapples,
Should he be foil'd, looks but to friends like these. (*Pulling out two daggers from his vest.*)
This steel is strong to give a vig'rous thrust;
The other on its venom'd point hath that
Which, in the feeblest hand, gives death as certain,
As tho' a giant smote the destin'd prey.

Cath. Thou desp'rate man! so arm'd against thyself!

Rud. Aye; and against myself with such resolves,
Consider well how I shall deal with those
Who may withstand my will or mar my purpose.
Think'st thou I'll feebly———

Cath. O be pacified.
I will be gone: I am a humbled wretch
On whom thou tramplest with a tyrant's cruelty. [Exit.

Rud. (*looks after her with a malignant laugh, and then goes to the door of an adjoining chamber, to the lock of which he applies his ear.*) All still within.—
I'm tired and heavy grown:
I'll lay me down to rest. She is secure:
No one can pass me here to gain her chamber.
If she hold parley now with any thing,
It must in truth be ghost or sprite.—Heigh ho!
I'm tired, and will to bed.
(*Lays himself on the couch and falls asleep. The cry of hounds is then heard without at a distance, with the sound of a horn; and presently* Orra *enters, bursting from the door of the adjoining chamber, in great alarm.*)

Or. Cathrina! sleepest thou? Awake! Awake! (*Running up to the couch and starting back on seeing* Rudigere.)
That hateful viper here!
Is this my nightly guard? Detested wretch!
I will steal back again.
(*Walks softly on tiptoe to the door of her chamber, when the cry of hounds, &c. is again heard without, nearer than before.*)
O no! I dare not.
Tho' sleeping, and most hateful when awake,
Still he is natural life and may be 'waked.
(*listening again.*)
'Tis nearer now: that dismal thrilling blast!
I must awake him. (*Approaching the couch and shrinking back again.*)
O no! no no!
Upon his face he wears a horrid smile
That speaks bad thoughts.
(Rud. *speaks in his sleep.*)
He mutters too my name.—
I dare not do it. (*Listening again.*)
The dreadful sound is now upon the wind,
Sullen and low, as if it wound its way
Into the cavern'd earth that swallow'd it.
I will abide in patient silence here;
Tho' hateful and asleep, I feel me still
Near something of my kind.
(*Crosses her arms, and leans in a cowering posture over the back of a chair at a distance from the couch; when presently the horn is heard without, louder than before, and she starts up.*)
O it returns! as tho' the yawning earth
Had given it up again, near to the walls.
The horribly mingled din! 'tis nearer still:
'Tis close at hand: 'tis at the very gate!
(*running up to the couch.*)
Were he a murd'rer, clenching in his hands
The bloody knife, I must awake him.—No!
That face of dark and subtile wickedness!
I dare not do it. (*listing again.*) Aye; 'tis at the gate—
Within the gate.—
What rushing blast is that
Shaking the doors? Some awful visitation
Dread entrance makes! O mighty God of heaven!
A sound ascends the stairs
Ho, Rudigere!
Awake, awake! Ho! Wake thee, Rudigere!

Rud. (*waking.*) What cry is that so terribly strong?—Ha, Orra!
What is the matter?

Or. It is within the walls. Did'st thou not hear it?

Rud. What? The loud voice that call'd me?

Or. No, it was mine.

Rud. It sounded in my ears
With more than human strength.

Or. Did it so sound?
There is around us, in this midnight air,
A power surpassing nature. List, I pray:
Altho' more distant now, dost thou not hear
The yell of hounds; the spectre-huntsman's horn?

Rud. I hear, indeed, a strangely mingled sound:
The wind is howling round the battlements.
But rest secure where safety is, sweet Orra!
Within these arms, nor man nor fiend shall harm thee.
(*Approaching her with a softened winning voice, while she pushes him off with abhorrence.*)

Or. Vile reptile! touch me not.

Rud. Ah Orra! thou art warp'd by prejudice,
And taught to think me base; but in my veins
Lives noble blood, which I will justify.

Or. But in thy heart, false traitor! what lives there?

Rud. Alas! thy angel-faultlessness conceives not
The strong temptations of a soul impassion'd
Beyond controul of reason.——At thy feet— (*kneeling.*)
O spurn me not.

(Enter several Servants, alarmed.)

Rud. What, all these fools upon us! Staring knaves,
What brings ye here at this untimely hour?

1st Serv. We have all heard it—'twas the yell of hounds
And clatt'ring steeds, and the shrill horn between.

Rud. Out on such folly!

2d Serv. In very truth it pass'd close to the walls;
Did not your Honour hear it?

Rud. Ha! say'st thou so? thou art not wont to join
In idle tales.—I'll to the battlements
And watch it there: it may return again,

[Exeunt *severally,* Rudigere *followed by* Servants, *and* Orra *into her own chamber.*

Scene IV.—the outlaws' cave.

Enter Theobald.

Theo. (*looking round.*) Here is a place in which some traces are
Of late inhabitants. In yonder nook
The embers faintly gleam, and on the walls
Hang spears and ancient arms: I must be right.
A figure thro' the gloom moves towards me.
Ho there! Whoe'er you are: Holla, good friend!

Enter an Outlaw.

Out. A stranger! Who art thou, who art thus bold,
To hail us here unbidden?

Theo. That thou shalt shortly know. Thou art, I guess,
One of the Outlaws, who this forest haunt.

Out. Be thy conjecture right or wrong, no more
Shalt thou return to tell where thou hast found us.
Now for thy life! (*Drawing his sword.*)

Theo. Hear me, I do entreat thee.

Out. Nay, nay! no foolish pleadings; for thy life
Is forfeit now; have at thee!

(*Falls fiercely upon* Theobald, *who also draws and defends himself bravely, when another* Outlaw *enters and falls likewise upon him.* Theo. *then recedes, fighting till he gets his back to the wall of the cavern, and there defends himself stoutly.*)

Enter Franko.

Frank. Desist, I charge you! Fighting with a stranger,
Two swords to one—a soli ary stranger!

1st Out. We are discover'd: had he master'd me,
He had return'd to tell his mates above
What neighbours in these nether caves they have.
Let us dispatch him.

Frank. No, thou hateful butcher!
Dispatch a man alone and in our power!
Who art thou, stranger, who dost use thy sword
With no mean skill; and in this perilous case
So bold an air and countenance maintainest?
What brought thee hither?

Theo. My name is Theobald of Falkenstein;
To find the valiant captain of these bands,
And crave assistance of his gen'rous arm:
This is my business here.

Frank (*struck and agitated. To his men.*)
Go join yo*r comrades in the further cave.

[Exeunt Outlaws.

And thou art Falkenstein? In truth thou art.
And who think'st thou am I?

Theo. Franko, the gen'rous leader of those Outlaws.

Frank. So am I call'd, and by that name alone
They know me. Sporting on the mountain's side,
Where Garva's wood waves green, in other days,
Some fifteen years ago, they called me Albert.

Theo. (*rushing into his arms.*) Albert; my play-mate Albert! Woe the day!
What cruel fortune drove thee to this state?

Frank. I'll tell thee all; but tell thou first to me
What is the aid thou camest here to ask.

Theo. Aye, thou wert ever thus: still forward bent
To serve, not to be serv'd.
But wave we this.
Last night a Lady to the castle came,
In thraldom by a villain kept, whom I
Would give my life to rescue. Of arm'd force
Being at present destitute, I crave
Assistance of your counsel and your arms.

Frank. When did'st thou learn that Outlaws harbour here,
For 'tis but lately we have held these haunts?

Theo. Not till within the precincts of the forest,
Following the traces of that villain's course,
One of your band I met, and recogniz'd
As an old soldier, who, some few years back,
Had under my command right bravely served.
Seeing himself discover'd, and encouraged
By what I told him of my story, freely
He offer'd to conduct me to his captain.
But in a tangled path some space before me,
Alarm'd at sight of spearmen thro' the brake,
He started from his way, and so I missed him,

Making, to gain your cave, my way alone.

Frank. Thou'rt welcome here: and gladly I'll assist thee,
Tho' not by arms, the force within the castle
So far out-numb'ring mine. But other means
May serve thy purpose better.

Theo. What other means, I pray?

Frank. From these low caves, a passage underground
Leads to the castle—to the very tower
Where, as I guess, the Lady is confined;
When sleep has still'd the house, we'll make our way.

Theo. Aye, by my faith it is a noble plan!
Guarded or not we well may overcome
The few that may compose her midnight guard.

Frank. We shall not shrink from that.——
But by my fay!
To-morrow is St. Michael's Eve: 'twere well
To be the spectre-huntsman for a night,
And bear her off, without pursuit or hindrance.

Theo. I comprehend thee not.

Frank. Thou shalt ere long.
But stand not here; an inner room I have
Where thou shalt rest and some refreshment take,
And then we will more fully talk of this,
Which, slightly mention'd, seems chimerical.
Follow me. (*Turning to him as they go out.*)
Hast thou still upon thine arm
That mark which from mine arrow thou receiv'dst
When sportively we shot? The wound was deep,
And gall'd thee much, but thou mad'st light of it.

Theo. Yes, here it is. (*Pulling up his sleeve as they go out, and* Exeunt.)

ACT IV.

Scene I.—The Ramparts of the Castle.

Enter Orra and Cathrina.

Cath. (*after a pause in which* Orra *walks once or twice across the stage thoughtfully.*) Go in, I pray; thou wand'rest here too long. (*A pause again.*)
The air is cold; behind those further mountains
The sun is set. I pray thee now go in.

Or. Ha! sets the sun already? Is the day
Indeed drawn to its close?

Cath. Yes, night approaches.
See, many a gather'd flock of cawing rooks
Are to their nests returning.

Or. (*solemnly.*) Night approaches!—
This awful night which living beings shrink from.
All now of every kind scour to their haunts,
While darkness, peopled with its hosts unknown,
Awful dominion holds. Mysterious night!
What things unutterable thy dark hours
May lap!—What from thy teeming darkness burst
Of horrid visitations, ere that sun
Again shall rise on the enlighten'd earth!
(*A pause.*)

Cath. Why dost thou gaze intently on the sky?
See'st thou aught wonderful?

Or. Look there; behold that strange gigantic form
Which yon grim cloud assumes; rearing aloft
The semblance of a warrior's plumed head,
While from its half-shaped arm a streamy dart
Shoots angrily? Behind him too, far stretch'd,
Seems there not, verily, a seried line
Of fainter misty forms?

Cath. I see, indeed,
A vasty cloud, of many clouds composed,
Towering above the rest; and that behind
In misty faintness seen, which hath some likeness
To a long line of rocks with pine-wood crown'd:
Or, if indeed the fancy so incline,
A file of spearmen, seen thro' drifted smoke.

Or. Nay, look how perfect now the form becomes:
Dost thou not see?—Aye and more perfect still.
O thou gigantic Lord, whose robed limbs
Beneath their stride span half the heavens! art thou
Of lifeless vapour form'd? Art thou not rather
Some air-clad spirit—some portentous thing—
Some mission'd Being?——Such a sky as this
Ne'er usher'd in a night of nature's rest.

Cath. Nay, many such I've seen; regard it not.
That form, already changing, will ere long
Dissolve to nothing. Tarry here no longer.
Go in, I pray.

Or. No; while one gleam remains
Of the sun's blessed light, I will not go.

Cath. Then let me fetch a cloak to keep thee warm,
For chilly blows the breeze.

Or. Do as thou wilt. [Exit Cath.

Enter an Outlaw, stealing softly behind her.

Out. (*in a low voice.*) Lady!—the Lady Orra!

Or. (*starting.*) Merciful Heaven! Sounds it beneath my feet
In earth or air? (*He comes forward.*)
Ha, a man!
Welcome is aught that wears a human face.
Did'st thou not hear a sound?

Out. What sound, an' please you?

Or. A voice which call'd upon me now: it spoke
In a low hollow tone, suppress'd and low,
Unlike a human voice.

Out. It was my own.

Or. What would'st thou have?

Out. Here is a letter, Lady.

Or. Who sent thee hither?

Out. It will tell thee all. (*Gives a letter.*)
I must be gone, your chieftain is at hand. [Exit.

Or. Comes it from Falkenstein? It is his seal.
I may not read it here I'll to my chamber.

[Exit *hastily, not perceiving* Rudigere, *who enters by the opposite side, before she has time to get off.*

Rud. A letter in her hand, and in such haste!
Some secret agent here from Falkenstein?
It must be so. (*Hastening after her.* Exit.)

Scene II.—The Outlaws' Cave.

Enter Theobald and Franko by opposite sides.

Theo. How now, good Captain; draws it near the time?
Are those the keys?

Frank. They are; this doth unlock
The entrance to the staircase, known alone
To Gomèz, ancient keeper of the castle,
Who is my friend in secret, and deters
The neighb'ring peasantry with dreadful tales
From visiting by night our wide domains.
The other doth unlock a secret door,
That leads us to the chamber where she sleeps.

Theo. Thanks, gen'rous friend! thou art my better genius.
Did'st thou not say, until the midnight horn
Hath sounded thrice, we must remain conceal'd?

Frank. Even so. And now I hear my men without
Telling the second watch.

Theo. How looks the night?

Frank. As we could wish: the stars do faintly twinkle
Thro' sever'd clouds, and shed but light sufficient
To shew each nearer object closing on you
In dim unshapely blackness. Aught that moves
Across your path, or sheep or straggling goat,
Is now a pawing steed or grizzly bull,
Large and terrific; every air-mov'd bush
Or jutting crag, some strange gigantic thing.

Theo. Is all still in the castle?

Frank. There is an owl sits hooting on the tower,
That answer from a distant mate receives,
Like the faint echo of his dismal cry;
While a poor houseless dog, by dreary fits,
Sits howling at the gate. All else is still.

Theo. Each petty circumstance is in our favour,
That makes the night more dismal.

Frank. Aye, all goes well: as I approach'd the walls,
I heard two sentinels—for now I ween,
The boldest spearman will not watch alone—
Together talk in the deep hollow voice
Of those who speak at midnight, under awe,
Of the dead stillness round them.

Theo. Then let us put ourselves in readiness,
And Heaven's good favour guide us! [Exeunt.

Scene III.—A gloomy apartment.

Enter Orra and Rudigere.

Or. (*aside.*) The room is darken'd: yester-night a lamp
Threw light around on roof and walls, and made
Its dreary space less dismal.

Rud. (*overhearing her, and calling to a* Servant *without.*)
Ho! more lights here!

Servant enters with a light, and Exit.

Thou art obey'd. In aught,
But in the company of human kind,
Thou shalt be gratified. Thy lofty mind
For higher super-human fellowship,
If such there be, may now prepare it's strength.

Or. Thou ruthless tyrant! They who have in battle
Fought valiantly, shrink like a helpless child
From any intercourse with things unearthly.
Art thou a man? And bear'st thou in thy breast
The feelings of a man? It cannot be!

Rud. Yes, madam; in my breast I bear too keenly
The feelings of a man—a man most wretched:
A scorn'd, rejected man.—Make me less miserable;
Nay rather should I say, make me most blest;
And then——— (*attempting to take her hand while she steps back from him, drawing herself up with an air stately and determined, and looking stedfastly in his face.*)
Thou know'st my firm determination:
Give me thy solemn promise to be mine.
This is the price, thou haughty, scornful maid,
That will redeem thee from the hour of terrour!
This is the price———

Or. Which never shall be paid.
(*Walks from him to the further end of the apartment.*)

Rud. (*after a pause.*) Thou art determin'd then. Be not so rash:
Bethink thee well what flesh and blood can bear:
The hour is near at hand.
(*She, turning round, waves him with her hand, to leave her.*)
Thou deign'st no answer?

Well; reap the fruits of thine unconquer'd pride. [Exit.

Manet Orra:

Or. I am alone: That closing door divides me
From ev'ry being owning nature's life.—
And shall I be constrain'd to hold communion
With that which owns it not?
(*After pacing to and fro for a little while.*)
O that my mind
Could raise its thoughts in strong and steady fervour
To him, the Lord of all existing things,
Who lives and is where'er existence is;
Grasping its hold upon his skirted robe,
Beneath whose mighty rule Angels and Spirits,
Demons and nether powers, all living things,
Hosts of the earth, with the departed dead
In their dark state of mystery, alike
Subjected are!—And I will strongly do it.—
Ah! Would I could! Some hidden powerful hindrance
Doth hold me back, and mars all thought.—
(*After a pause, in which she stands fixed with her arms crossed on her breast.*)
Dread intercourse!
O, if it look on me with its dead eyes!
If it should move its lock'd and earthly lips,
And utt'rance give to the grave's hollow sounds!
If it stretch forth its cold and bony grasp——
O horror, horror!
(*Sinking lower at every successive idea, as she repeats these four last lines, till she is quite upon her knees on the ground.*)
O that beneath these planks of senseless matter
I could, until the dreadful hour is past,
As senseless be!
(*Striking the floor with her hands.*)
O open and receive me,
Ye happy things of still and lifeless being,
That to the awful steps which tread upon ye
Unconscious are!

Enter Cathrina behind her.

Who's there? Is't any thing?

Cath. 'Tis I, my dearest Lady! 'tis Cathrina.

Or. (*Embracing her.*) How kind! Such blessed kindness! keep thee by me;
I'll hold thee fast: an angel brought thee hither.
I needs must weep to think thou art so kind
In mine extremity.—Where wert thou hid?

Cath. In that small closet, since the supper hour,
I've been conceal'd. For searching round the chamber,
I found its door, and enter'd. Fear not now:
I will not leave thee till the break of day.

Or. Heaven bless thee for it! Till the break of day!
The very thought of day-break gives me life.
If but this night were past, I have good hope
That noble Theobald will soon be here
For my deliv'rance.

Cath. Wherefore think'st thou so?

Or. A stranger, when thou left'st me on the ramparts,
Gave me a letter which I quickly open'd,
As soon as I, methought, had gain'd my room
In privacy; but close behind me came
That Dæmon Rudigere, and snatching at it,
Forced me to cast it to the flames, from which,
I struggled with him still, he could not save it.

Cath. You have not read it then.

Or. No; but the seal
Was Theobald's, and I could swear ere long
He will be here to free me from this thraldom.

Cath. God grant he may!

Or. If but this night were past! How goes the time?
Has it not enter'd on the midnight watch?

Cath. (*Pointing to a small slab at the corner of the stage on which is placed a sand glass.*)
That glass I've set to measure it. As soon
As all the sand is run, you are secure;
The midnight watch is past.

Or. (*Running to the glass and looking at it eagerly*)
There is not much to run: O an't were finish'd!
But it so slowly runs!

Cath. Yes; watching it,
It seemeth slow. But heed it not; the while,
I'll tell thee some old tale, and ere I've finish'd,
The midnight watch is gone. Sit down, I pray! (*They sit*, Orra *drawing her chair close to* Cathrina.)
What story shall I tell thee?

Or. Something, my friend, which thou thyself hast known
Touching the awful intercourse which spirits
With mortal men have held at this dread hour.
Did'st thou thyself e'er meet with one whose eyes
Had look'd upon the specter'd dead—had seen
Forms from another world?

Cath. Never but once.

Or. (*eagerly.*) Once then thou didst! O tell it! Tell it me!

Cath. Well; since I needs must tell it, once I knew
A melancholy man, who did aver,
That, journ'ying on a time, o'er a wild waste,
By a fell storm o'erta'en, he was compell'd
To pass the night in a deserted tower,
Where a poor hind, the sole inhabitant
Of the sad place, prepared for him a bed.
And, as he told his tale, at dead of night,
By the pale lamp that in his chamber burn'd,
As it might be an arm's-length from his bed—

Or. So close upon him?

Cath. Yes.

Or. Go on; what saw he?

Cath. An upright form, wound in a clotted shroud—
Clotted and stiff, like one swaith'd up in haste
After a bloody death.

Or. Oh horrible!
Cath. He started from his bed and gaz'd upon it.
Or. And did he speak to it?
Cath. He could not speak.
It's visage was uncover'd, and at first
Seem'd fix'd and shrunk, like one in coffin'd sleep:
But, as he gaz'd, there came, he wist not how,
Into its beamless eyes a horrid glare,
And turning towards him, for it did move,——
Why dost thou grasp me thus?
Or. Go on, go on!
Cath. Nay, Heaven forfend! Thy shrunk and sharpen'd features
Are of the corse's colour, and thine eyes
Are full of tears. How's this?
Or. I know not how.
A horrid sympathy jarr'd on my heart,
And forced into mine eyes these icy tears.
A fearful kindredship there is between
The living and the dead: an awful bond:
Wo's me! that we do shudder at ourselves—
At that which we must be!——A dismal thought!
Where dost thou run? thy story is not told:
(*Seeing* Cath. *go towards the sand glass*.)
Cath. (*shewing the glass*.) A better story I will tell thee now;
The midnight watch is past.
Or. Ha! let me see.
Cath. There's not one sand to run.
Or. But it is barely past.
Cath. 'Tis more than past.
For I did set it later than the hour
To be assur'dly sure.
Or. Then it is gone indeed: O Heaven be praised!
The fearful gloom gone by!
(*Holding up her hands in gratitude to Heaven, and then looking round her with cheerful animation*.)
In truth already
I feel as if I breath'd the morning air:
I'm marvellously lighten'd.
Cath. Ne'ertheless,
Thou art forspent; I'll run to my apartment
And fetch some cordial drops that will revive thee.
Or. Thou need'st not go: I've ta'en thy drops already:
I'm bold and buoyant grown.
(*Bounding lightly from the floor*.)
Cath. I'll soon return:
Thou art not fearful now?
Or. No; I breathe lightly;
Valour within me grows most powerfully,
Would'st thou but stay to see it, gentle Cathrine.
Cath. I will return to see it, ere thou canst
Three times repeat the letters of thy name.
[Exit *hastily by the concealed door*.)
Or. This burst of courage shrinks most shamefully. (*Alone*.)
I'll follow her.— (*Striving to open the door*.)
'Tis fast: it will not open.
I'll count my footsteps as I pace the floor
Till she return again.
(*Paces up and down, muttering to herself, when a horn is heard without, pausing and sounding three times, each time louder than before*.)
(Orra *runs again to the door*.)
Despair will give me strength: where is the door?
Mine eyes are dark, I cannot find it now.
O God! protect me in this awful pass!
(*After a pause, in which she stands with her body bent in a cowering posture, with her hands locked together, and trembling violently, she starts up and looks wildly round her*.)
There's nothing, yet I felt a chilly hand
Upon my shoulder press'd. With open'd eyes
And ears intent I'll stand. Better it is
Thus to abide the awful visitation,
That cower in blinded horror, strain'd intensely
With ev'ry beating of my goaded heart.
(*Looking round her with a steady sternness, but shrinking again almost immediately*.)
I cannot do it: on this spot I'll hold me
In awful stillness.
(*Bending her body as before; then, after a momentary pause, pressing both her hands upon her head*.)
The icy scalp of fear is on my head,—
The life stirs in my hair: it is a sense
That tells the nearing of unearthly steps,
Albeit my ringing ears no sounds distinguish.
(*Looking round, as if by irresistible impulse to a great door at the bottom of the stage, which bursts open, and the form of a huntsman, clothed in black, with a horn in his hand, enters and advances towards her. She utters a loud shriek, and falls senseless on the ground*.)
Theo. (*Running up to her, and raising her from the ground*.)
No semblance but real agony of fear.
Orra, oh Orra! Know'st thou not my voice?
Thy knight, thy champion, the devoted Theobald?
Open thine eyes and look upon my face:
(*Unmasking*.)
I am no fearful waker from the grave:
Dost thou not feel? 'Tis the warm touch of life.
Look up and fear will vanish.—Words are vain!
What a pale countenance of ghastly strength
By horrour changed! O idiot that I was!
To hazard this!—The villain hath deceiv'd me!
My letter she has ne'er received. Oh fool!
That I should trust to this!
(*Beating his head distractedly*.)

Enter Franko, by the same door.

Frank. What is the matter? What strange turn is this?
Theo. O cursed sanguine fool! could I not think——
She moves—she moves! rouse thee, my gentle Orra!

'Tis no strange voice that calls thee: 'tis thy friend.

Frank. She opens now her eyes.

Theo. But oh that look!

Frank. She knows thee not, but gives a stifled groan
And sinks again in stupor.
Make no more fruitless lamentation here,
But bear her hence: the cool and open air
May soon restore her. Let us, while we may,
Occasion seize, lest we should be surprised.

[EXEUNT; Orra *borne off in a state of insensibility.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.—THE GREAT HALL OF THE CASTLE.

Enter RUDIGERE, CATHRINA, and Attendants, by different Doors.

Rud. (*To* Attend.) Return'd again! Is any thing discover'd?
Or door or passage? garment dropt in haste?
Or footstep's track, or any mark of flight?

1st At. No, by my faith! tho' from its highest turrets
To its deep vaults, the castle we have search'd.

Cath. 'Tis vain to trace the marks of trackless feet.
If that in truth it hath convey'd her hence,
The yawning earth has yielded them a passage,
Or else, thro' rifted roofs the buoyant air.

Rud. Fools! search again. I'll raze the very walls
From their foundations but I will discover
If door or pass there be, to us unknown.
Ho! Gomez there! (*Calling off the stage.*)
He keeps himself aloof,
Nor aids the search with true and hearty will.
I am betray'd—Ho! Gomez there, I say!
He shrinks away: go drag the villain hither,
And let the torture wring confession from him.

(*A loud knocking heard at the gate.*)

Ha! who seeks entrance at this early hour
In such a desert place?

Cath. Some hind, perhaps,
Who brings intelligence. Heaven grant it be!

Enter an armed VASSAL.

Rud. Ha! One from Aldenberg! What brings thee hither?

Vas. (*seizing* Rud.) Thou art my prisoner.
(*To* Attendants.)
Upon your peril,
Assist me to secure him.

Rud. Audacious hind! by what authority
Speak'st thou such bold commands? Produce thy warrant.

Vas. 'Tis at the gate, and such as thou must yield to:
Count Hughobert himself, with armed men,
A goodly band, his pleasure to enforce.
(*Secures him.*)

Rud. What sudden freak is this? am I suspected
Of aught but true and honourable faith?

Vas. Aye, by our holy Saints! more than suspected.
Thy creature Maurice, whom thou thought'st to bribe
With things of seeming value, hath discover'd
The cunning fraud; on which his tender conscience,
Good soul! did o'the sudden so upbraid him,
That to his Lord forthwith he made confession
Of all the plots against the Lady Orra,
In which thy wicked arts had tempted him
To take a wicked part. All is discover'd.

Cath. (*aside.*) All is discover'd! Where then shall I hide me?
(*Aloud to* Vas.) What is discover'd?

Vas. Ha! most virtuous Lady!
Art thou alarmed? Fear not: the world well knows
How good thou art; and to the Countess shortly,
Who with her Lord is near, thou wilt no doubt
Give good account of all that thou hast done.

Cath. (*aside as she retires in agitation.*)
O Heaven forbid! What holes 'th' earth will hide me! [EXIT.

Enter by the opposite side, HUGHOBERT, ELEANORA, HELEN, GLOTTENBAL, URSTON, MAURICE, and Attendants.

Hugh. (*speaking as he enters.*) Is he secured?

Vas. He is, my Lord; behold!
(*pointing to* Rud.)

Hugh. (*to* Rud.) Black artful traitor! Of a sacred trust,
Blindly reposed in thee, the base betrayer
For wicked ends; full well upon the ground
May'st thou decline those darkly frowning eyes,
And gnaw thy lip in shame.

Rud. And rests no shame with him, whose easy faith
Entrusts a man unproved; or, having proved him,
Lets a poor hireling's unsupported testimony
Shake the firm confidence of many years?

Hugh. Here the accuser stands; confront him boldly,
And spare him not.
(*Bringing forward* Maurice.)

Maur. (*to* Rud.) Deny it if thou canst. Thy brazen front,
All brazen as it is, denies it not.

Rud. (*to* Maur.) Fool! that of prying curiosity
And av'rice art compounded! I in truth
Did give to thee a counterfeited treasure
To bribe thee to a counterfeited trust;
Meet recompense! Ha, ha! Maintain thy tale

For I deny it not. (*With careless derision.*)
Maur. O subtile traitor!
Dost thou so varnish it with seeming mirth?
Hugh. Sir Rudigere, thou dost, I must confess,
Out-face him well. But call the Lady Orra;
If towards her thou hast thyself comported
In honesty, she will declare it freely.
Bring Orra hither. (*To* Attendant.)
1st At. Would that we could: last night i' the midnight watch
She disappear'd; but whether man or devil
Hath borne her hence, in truth we cannot tell.
Hugh. O both! Both man and devil together join'd.
(*To* Rud. (*furiously.*) Fiend, villain, murderer! Produce her instantly.
Dead or alive, produce thy hapless charge.
Rud. Restrain your rage, my Lord; I would right gladly
Obey you, were it possible: the place,
And the mysterious means of her retreat,
Are both to me unknown.
Hugh. Thou liest! thou liest!
Glot. (*coming forward.*) Thou liest, beast, villain, traitor! think'st thou still
To fool us thus? Thou shalt be forced to speak.
(*To* Hugh.) Why lose we time in words when other means
Will quickly work? Straight to those pillars bind him,
And let each sturdy varlet of your train
Inflict correction on him.
Maur. Aye, this alone will move him.
Hugh. Thou say'st well:
By Heaven it shall be done!
Rud. And will Count Hughobert degrade in me
The blood of Aldenberg to shame himself?
Hugh. That plea avails thee not; thy spurious birth
Gives us full warrant, as thy conduct varies,
To reckon thee or noble or debas'd.
(*To* At.) Straight bind the traitor to the place of shame.
(*As they are struggling to bind* Rud. *he gets one of his hands free, and, pulling out a dagger from under his clothes, stabs himself.*)
Rud. Now, take your will of me, and drag my corse
Thro' mire and dust; your shameless fury now
Can do me no disgrace.
Urst. (*advancing.*) Rash, daring, thoughtless wretch! dost thou so close
A wicked life in hardy desperation?
Rud. Priest, spare thy words: I add not to my sins
That of presumption, in pretending now
To offer up to heaven the forced repentance
Of some short moments for a life of crimes.
Urst. My son, thou dost mistake me: let thy heart
Confession make——————

Glot. (*interrupting* Urst.) Yes, dog! Confession make
Of what thou'st done with Orra; else I'll spurn thee,
And cast thy hateful carcass to the kites.
Hugh.) *pulling back* Glot. *as he is going to spurn* Rud. *with his foot, who is now fallen upon the ground.*)
Nay, nay, forbear; such outrage is unmanly.
(Eleanora, *who with* Alice *had retired from the shocking sight of* Rudigere, *now comes forward to him.*)
El. Oh, Rudigere! thou art a dying man,
And we will speak to thee without upbraiding.
Confess, I do entreat thee, ere thou goest
To thy most awful change, and leave us not
In this our horrible uncertainty.
Is Orra here conceal'd?
Al. Thou hast not slain her?
Confession make, and Heaven have mercy on thee!
Rud. Yes, Ladies; with these words of gentle meekness
My heart is changed; and that you may perceive
How greatly changed, let Glottenbal approach me;
Spent am I now, and can but faintly speak—
Ev'n unto him, in token of forgiveness,
I'll tell what ye desire.
El. Thank Heaven, thou art so changed!
Hugh. (*to* Glot.) Go to him, boy.
(Glottenbal *goes to* Rudigere, *and stooping over him to hear what he has to say,* Rudigere, *taking a small dagger from his bosom, strikes* Glottenbal *on the neck.*)
Glot. Oh, he has wounded me!—Detested traitor!
Take that and that; would thou had'st still a life
For every thrust. (*Killing him.*)
Hugh. (*alarmed.*) Ha! Has he wounded thee, my son?
Glot. A scratch;
Tis nothing more. He aim'd it at my throat,
But had not strength to thrust.
Hugh. Thank God, he had not!
(*A trumpet sounds without.*)
Hark, martial notice of some high approach!
(To Attendants.) Go to the gate.
[Exeunt Attendants.
El. Who may it be? This castle is remote
From every route which armed leaders take.

Enter a Servant.

Ser. The banneret of Basle is at the gate.
Hugh. Is he in force?
Ser. Yes, thro' the trees his distant bands are seen
Some hundreds strong, I guess; tho' with himself
Two followers only come.

Enter Hartman attended.

Hugh. Forgive me, banneret, if I receive thee

With more surprise than courtesy. How is it?
Com'st thou in peace?

Hart. To you, my Lord, I frankly will declare
The purpose of my coming: having heard it,
It is for you to say if I am come,
As much I wish, in peace.
(*To El.*) Countess, your presence much emboldens me
To think it so shall be.

Hugh. (*impatiently.*) Proceed, I beg.
When burghers gentle courtesy affect,
It chafes me more than all their sturdy boasting.

Hart. Then with a burgher's plainness, Hughobert,
I'll try my tale to tell,—nice task I fear!
So that it may not gall a baron's pride.
Brave Theobald, the Lord of Falkenstein,
Co-burgher also of our ancient city,
Whose cause of course is ours, declares himself
The suitor of thy ward the Lady Orra;
And learning that within these walls she is,
By thine authority, in durance kept,
In his behalf I come to set her free;
As an oppressed Dame, such service claiming
From every gen'rous knight. What is thy answer?
Say, am I come in peace? Wilt thou release her?

Hugh. Ah, would I could! In faith thou gall'st me shrewdly

Hart. I've been inform'd of all that now disturbs you,
By one who held me waiting at the gate.
Until the maid be found, if 'tis your pleasure,
Cease enmity.

Hugh. Then let it cease. A traitor has deceived me,
And there he lies.
(*Pointing to the body of* Rud.)

Hart. (*looking at the body.*)
A ghastly smile of fell malignity
On his distorted face death has arrested.
(*Turning again to* Hugh.)
And has he died, and no confession made?
All means that may discover Orra's fate
Shut from us?

Hugh. Ah! the fiend hath utter'd nothing
That could betray his secret. If she lives—

El. Alas, alas! think you he murder'd her?

Al. Merciful Heaven forfend!

Enter a Soldier in haste.

Sold. O, I have heard a voice, a dismal voice!

Omnes. What hast thou heard?

El. What voice?

Sold. The Lady Orra's.

El. Where? Lead us to the place.

Hugh. Where did'st thou hear it, Soldier?

Sold. In a deep tangled thicket of the wood,
Close to a ruin'd wall, o'ergrown with ivy,
That marks the ancient out-works of the castle.

Hugh. Haste; lead the way.
[Exeunt *all eagerly, without order, following the* Soldier, Glottenbal *and one* Attendant *excepted.*

At. You do not go, my Lord?

Glot. I'm sick, and strangely dizzy grows my head,
And pains shoot from my wound. It is a scratch,
But from a devil's fang.—There's mischief in it.
Give me thine arm, and lead me to a couch:
I'm very faint.

At. This way, my Lord, there is a chamber near.
[Exeunt Glottenbal, *supported by the* Attendant.

SCENE II.—THE FOREST NEAR THE CASTLE; IN FRONT A ROCKY BANK CROWNED WITH A RUINED WALL O'ERGROWN WITH IVY, AND THE MOUTH OF A CAVERN SHADED WITH BUSHES:

Enter Franko, conducting Hughobert, Hartman, Eleanora, Alice, and Urston, the Soldier following them.

Frank. (*to* Hugh.) This is the entry to our secret haunts.
And now, my Lord, having inform'd you truly
Of the device, well meant, but most unhappy,
By which the Lady Orra from her prison
By Falkenstein was ta'en; myself, my outlaws,
Unhappy men that better days have seen,
Drove to this lawless life by hard necessity,
Are on your mercy cast

Hugh. Which shall not fail you, valiant Franko. Much
Am I then indebted to thee. had'st thou not
Of thine own free good will become our guide
As wand'ring here thou found'st us, we had ne'er
The spot discover'd; for this honest Soldier,
A stranger to the forest, sought in vain
To thread the tangled path.

El. (*to* Frank.) She is not well thou say'st,
and from her swoon
Imperfectly recover'd.

Frank. When I left her,
She so appear'd.—But enter not, I pray,
Till I give notice.—Holla, you within!
Come forth and fear no ill.
(*A shriek heard from the cave.*)

Omnes. What dismal shriek is that?

Al. 'Tis Orra's voice.

El. No, no! It cannot be! It is some wretch,
In maniac's fetters bound.

Hart. The horrid thought that burst into my mind!
Forbid it, righteous Heaven!
(*Running into the cave, he is prevented by* Theobald, *who rushes out upon him.*)

Theo. Hold, hold! no entry here but o'er my corse,

When ye have master'd me.

Hart. My Theobald!
Dost thou not know thy friends?

Theo. Ha! thou, my Hartman! Art thou come to me?

Hart. Yes, I am come. What means that look of anguish?
She is not dead?

Theo. Oh, no! it is not death!

Hart. What mean'st thou? Is she well?

Theo. Her body is.

Hart. And not her mind?———Oh direst wreck of all!
That noble mind!———But 'tis some passing seizure,
Some powerful movement of a transient nature;
It is not madness?

Theo. (*shrinking from him, and bursting into tears*)
'Tis heaven's infliction; let us call it so;
Give it no other name. (*Covering his face.*)

El. (*to* Theo.) Nay, do not thus despair: when she beholds us,
She'll know her friends, and, by our kindly soothing,
Be gradually restored.

Al. Let me go to her.

Theo. Nay, forbear, I pray thee;
I will myself with thee, my worthy Hartman,
Go in and lead her forth.

(Theobald *and* Hartman *go into the cavern, while those without wait in deep silence, which is only broken once or twice by a scream from the cavern and the sound of* Theobald's *voice speaking soothingly, till they return, leading forth* Orra, *with her hair and dress disordered, and the appearance of wild distraction in her gait and countenance.*)

Or. (*shrinking back as she comes from under the shade of the trees, &c. and dragging* Theobald *and* Hartman *back with her.*)
Come back, come back! The fierce and fiery light!

Theo. Shrink not, dear love! it is the light of day.

Or. Have cocks crow'd yet?

Theo. Yes; twice I've heard already
Their mattin sound. Look up to the blue sky;
Is it not day-light there? And these green boughs
Are fresh and fragrant round thee: every sense
Tells thee it is the cheerful early day.

Or. Aye, so it is; day takes his daily turn,
Rising between the gulphy dells of night,
Like whiten'd billows on a gloomy sea.
Till glow-worms gleam, and stars peep thro' the dark,
And will-o'-the-wisp his dancing taper light,
They will not come again.
(*Bending her ear to the ground.*)
Hark, hark! Aye, hark:
They are all there: I hear their hollow sound
Full many a fathom down.

Theo. Be still, poor troubled soul! they'll ne'er return:
They are for ever gone. Be well assured
Thou shalt from henceforth have a cheerful home
With crackling faggots on thy midnight fire,
Blazing like day around thee; and thy friends—
Thy living, loving friends still by thy side,
To speak to thee and cheer thee.—See, my Orra!
They are beside thee now; dost thou not know them? (*Pointing to* Eleanora *and* Alice.)

Or. (*gazing at them with her hand held up to shade her eyes.*)
No, no! athwart the wav'ring garish light,
Things move and seem to be, and yet are nothing

El. (*going near her.*) My gentle Orra! hast thou then forgot me?
Dost thou not know my voice?

Or. 'Tis like an old tune to my ear return'd.
For there be those, who sit in cheerful halls
And breathe sweet air, and speak with pleasant sounds;
And once I liv'd with such; some years gone by;
I wot not now how long.

Hugh. Keen words that rend my heart!—Thou had'st a home,
And one whose faith was pledged for thy protection.

Urst. Be more composed, my Lord, some faint remembrance
Returns upon her with the well-known sound
Of voices once familiar to her ear.
Let Alice sing to her some fav'rite tune,
That may lost thoughts recall.

(Alice *sings an old tune, and* Orra, *who listens eagerly and gazes on her while she sings, afterwards bursts into a wild laugh.*)

Or. Ha, ha! the witched air sings for thee bravely.
Hoot owls thro' mantling fog for mattin birds?
It lures not me.—I know thee well enough:
The bones of murder'd men thy measure beat,
And fleshless heads nod to thee.—Off, I say!
Why are ye here?—That is the blessed sun.

El. Ah, Orra! do not look upon us thus!
These are the voices of thy loving friends
That speak to thee: this is a friendly hand
That presses thine so kindly.

(*Putting her hand upon* Orra's, *who gives a loud shriek and shrinks from her with horror.*)

Hart. O grievous state. (*Going up to her.*) What terror seizes thee?

Or. Take it away! It was the swathed dead:
I know its clammy, chill, and bony touch.
(*Fixing her eyes fiercely on* Eleanora.)
Come not again; I'm strong and terrible now:
Mine eyes have look'd upon all dreadful things;
And when the earth yawns, and the hell-blast sounds,
I'll 'bide the trooping of unearthly steps
With stiff-clench'd, terrible strength.

(*Holding her clenched hands over her head*

with an air of grandeur and defiance.)
Hugh. (*beating his breast.*) A murd'rer is a guiltless wretch to me.
Hart. Be patient; 'tis a momentary pitch;
Let me encounter it.
(*Goes up to* Orra, *and fixes his eyes upon her, which she, after a moment, shrinks from and seeks to avoid, yet still, as if involuntarily, looks at him again.*)
Or. Take off from me thy strangely-fasten'd eye:
I may not look upon thee, yet I must.
(*Still turning from him, and still snatching a hasty look at him as before.*)
Unfix thy baleful glance: Art thou a snake?
Something of horrid power within thee dwells.
Still, still that powerful eye doth suck me in
Like a dark eddy to its wheeling core.
Spare me! O spare me, Being of strange power,
And at thy feet my subject head I'll lay.
(*Kneeling to* Hartman, *and bending her head submissively.*)
El. Alas, the piteous sight! to see her thus;
The noble, generous, playful, stately Orra!
Theo. (*running to* Hartman, *and pushing him away with indignation.*)
Out on thy hateful and ungenerous guile!
Think'st thou I'll suffer o'er her wretched state
The slightest shadow of a base controul?
(*Raising* Orra *from the ground.*)
No, rise thou stately flower with rude blasts rent;
As honour'd art thou with thy broken stem
And leafets strew'd, as in thy summer's pride.
I've seen thee worship'd like a regal Dame
With ev'ry studied form of mark'd devotion,
Whilst I, in distant silence, scarcely proffer'd
Ev'n a plain soldier's courtesy; but now,
No liege-man to his crowned mistress sworn,
Bound and devoted is as I to thee;
And he who offers to thy alter'd state
The slightest seeming of diminish'd rev'rence,
Must in my blood——(*to* Hartman) O pardon me, my friend!
Thou'st wrung my heart.
Hart. Nay, do thou pardon me: I am to blame:
Thy nobler heart shall not again be wrung.
But what can now be done? O'er such wild ravings
There must be some controul.
Theo. O none! none, none! but gentle sympathy
And watchfulness of love.
My noble Orra!
Wander where'er thou wilt; thy vagrant steps
Shall follow'd be by one, who shall not weary,
Nor e'er detach him from his hopeless task;
Bound to thee now as fairest, gentlest beauty
Could ne'er have bound him.
Al. See how she gazes on him with a look,
Subsiding gradually to softer sadness,
Half saying that she knows him.
El. There is a kindness in her changing eye.
Yes, Orra, 'tis the valiant Theobald,
Thy knight and champion, whom thou gazest on.
Or. The brave are like the brave; so should it be.
He was a goodly man—a noble knight.
(*To* Theobald.) What is thy name, young soldier?—Woe is me!
For prayers of grace are said o'er dying men,
Yet they have laid thy clay in unblest earth—
Shame! shame! not with the still'd and holy dead.
This shall be rectified; I'll find it out;
And masses shall be said for thy repose;
Thou shalt not troop with these.
El. 'Tis not the dead, 'tis Theobald himself
Alive and well, who standeth by thy side.
Or. (*looking wildly round.*)
Where, where? All dreadful things are near me, round me,
Beneath my feet and in the loaded air.
Let him be gone! The place is horrible!
Baneful to flesh and blood.——The dreadful blast!
Their hounds now yell below i' the centre gulph,
They may not rise again till solemn bells
Have given the stroke that severs night from morn.
El. O rave not thus! Dost thou not know us, Orra?
Or. (*hastily.*) Aye, well enough I know ye.
Urst. Ha! think ye that she does?
El. It is a terrible smile of recognition,
If such it be.
Hart. Nay, do not thus your restless eyeballs move,
But look upon us steadily, sweet Orra.
Or. Away! your faces waver to and fro;
I'll know you better in your winding-sheets,
When the moon shines upon ye.
Theo. Give o'er, my Friends; you see it is in vain;
Her mind within itself holds a dark world
Of dismal phantasies and horrid forms!
Contend with her no more.

Enter an ATTENDANT, in an abrupt disturbed manner.

At. (*to* Eleanor, *aside.*)
Lady I bring to you most dismal news:
Too grievous for my Lord, so suddenly
And unprepar'd, to hear.
El. (*aside.*) What is it? Speak.
At. (*aside to* El.) His son is dead, all swell'd and rack'd with pain;
And on the dagger's point, which the sly traitor
Still in his stiffen'd grasp retains, foul stains,
Like those of limed poison, shew full well
The wicked cause of his untimely death.
Hugh. (*overhearing them.*)
Who speaks of death? What did'st thou whisper there?

How is my son?——What look is that thou wear'st?
He is not dead?——Thou dost not speak! O God!
I have no son. (*After a pause.*)
I am bereft!——But this!
But only him!—Heaven's vengeance deals the stroke.

Urst. Heaven oft in mercy smites ev'n when the blow
Severest is.

Hugh. I had no other hope.
Fell is the stroke, if mercy in it be!
Could this—could this alone atone my crime?

Urst. Submit thy soul to Heaven's all-wise decree.
Perhaps his life had blasted more thy hopes
Than ev'n his grievous end.

Hugh. He was not all a father's heart could wish;
But oh, he was my son!—my only son:
My child—the thing that from his cradle grew
And was before me still.—Oh, oh! Oh, oh!
(*Beating his breast, and groaning deeply.*)

Or. (*running up to him.*)
Ha! dost thou groan, old man? Art thou in trouble?
Out on it! tho' they lay him in the mould,
He's near thee still.—I'll tell thee how it is:
A hideous burst hath been: the damn'd and holy,
The living and the dead, together are
In horrid neighbourship.—'Tis but thin vapour,
Floating around thee, makes the wav'ring bound.
Poh! blow it off, and see th' uncurtain'd reach.
See! from all points they come; earth casts them up!
In grave-clothes swath'd are those but now in death;
And there be some half bone, half cased in shreds
Of that which flesh hath been; and there be some
With wicker'd ribs, thro' which the darkness scowls.
Back, back!—They close upon us.—Oh the void
Of hollow unball'd sockets staring grimly,
And lipless jaws that move and clatter round us
In mockery of speech!—Back, back, I say!
Back, back!
(*Catching hold of* Hughobert *and* Theobald, *and dragging them back with her in all the wild strength of frantic horror, whilst the curtain drops.*)

———— ————

THE DREAM: A TRAGEDY.

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

MEN.

OSTERLOO, *an Imperial General.*
PRIOR, *of the Monastery.*
BENEDICT, JEROME, PAUL, } *Monks.*
MORAND, WOVELREID, } *Officers in the service of the* Prior.
The IMPERIAL AMBASSADOR.
Officers *serving under* Osterloo.
Sexton, Monks, Soldiers, Peasants, &c.

WOMEN

LEONORA.
AGNES.

SCENE, *the Monastery of St. Maurice* in Switzerland; *a Castle near it.*

TIME, *the middle of the 14th Century.*

ACT I.

SCENE I.—A COURT WITHIN THE MONASTERY, WITH A GRATED IRON GATE OPENING INTO AN OUTER COURT, THROUGH WHICH ARE SEEN SEVERAL PEASANTS WAITING.

JEROME is discovered on the front of the stage, walking backwards and forwards in a disturbed manner, then stopping and speaking to himself.

Jer. Twice in one night the same awful vision repeated! And Paul also terrified with a similar visitation! This is no common accidental mimicry of sleep: the shreds and remnants of our day-thoughts, put together at night in some fantastic incongruous form, as the drifting clouds of a broken up storm, piece themselves again into uncertain shapes of rocks and animals. No, no! there must be some great and momentous meaning in this.

Enter BENEDICT behind him.

Ben. Some great and momentous meaning in this! What art thou musing upon?

Jer. Be satisfied! be satisfied! It is not always fitting that the mind should lay open the things it is busy withal, though an articulate sound may sometimes escape it to set curiosity on the rack. Where is brother Paul? Is he still at his devotions?

Ben. I believe so. But look where the poor Peasants are waiting without: it is the hour when they expect our benefactions. Go, and speak to them: thou hast always been their favourite confessor, and they want consolation.

(*Beckoning the* Peasants, *who thereupon advance through the gate, while* Jerome *stretches out his hand to prevent them.*)

Jer. Stop there! Come not within the gates! I charge you advance no farther. (*To* Benedict *angrily.*) There is death and contagion in every one of them, and yet thou would'st admit them so near us. Dost thou indeed expect a miracle to be wrought in our behalf? Are we not flesh and blood? and does not the grave yawn for us as well as other men?

(*To the* Peasants *still more vehemently.*) Turn, I charge you, and retire without the gate.

1st Peas. Oh! be not so stern with us, good Father! There are ten new corpses in the village since yesterday, and scarcely ten men left in it with strength enough to bury them. The best half of the village are now under ground, who, but three weeks gone by, were all alive and well. O do not chide us away!

2d Peas. God knows if any of us shall ever enter these gates again; and it revives us to come once a day to receive your blessings, good Fathers.

Jer. Well, and you shall have our blessing, my Children; but come not so near us; we are mortal men like yourselves, and there is contagion about you.

1st Peas. Ah! no, no! Saint Maurice will take care of his own; there is no fear of you, Fathers.

Jer. I hope he will; but it is presumptuous to tempt danger. Retire, I beseech you, and you shall have relief given to you without the gates. If you have any love for us, retire.

(*The* Peasants *retire.*)

Ben. Well, I feel a strong faith within me, that our Saint, or some other good spirit, will take care of us. How is it that thou art so alarmed and so vehement with those good people? It is not thy usual temper.

Jer. Be satisfied, I pray thee: I cannot tell thee now. Leave me to myself a little while. —Would to God brother Paul were come to me! Ha! here he is.

Enter PAUL; and JEROME, after waiting impatiently till BENEDICT retires, advances to him eagerly.

Was it to a spot near the black monument in the stranger's burying vault, that it pointed?

Paul. Yes, to the very spot described by thee yesterday morning, when thou first

told'st me thy dream: and, indeed, every circumstance of my last night's vision strongly resembled thine; or rather, I should say, was the same. The fixed frown of it's ghastly face——

Jer. Aye, and the majestic motion of its limbs. Did it not wear a mantle over its right shoulder, as if for concealment rather than grace?

Paul. I know not; I did not mark that: but it strode before me as distinctly as ever mortal man did before my waking sight; and yet as no mortal man ever did before the waking sight.

Jer. But it appeared to thee only once.

Paul. Only once; for I waked under such a deep horror, that I durst not go to sleep again.

Jer. When it first appeared to me, as I told thee, the night before last, the form, though distinctly, was but faintly imaged forth; and methought it rose more powerfully to my imagination as I told it to thee, than in the dream itself. But last night, when it returned, it was far more vivid than before. I waked indeed as thou did'st, impressed with a deep horror, yet irresistible sleep seized upon me again; and O how it appeared to me the third time, like a palpable, horrid reality!

(*After a pause.*)

What is to be done?

Paul. What can be done? We can stop no division of the Imperial army till one shall really march by this pass

Jer. And this is not likely; for I received a letter from a friend two days ago, by an express messenger, who says, he had delayed sending it, hoping to have it conveyed to me by one of Count Osterloo's soldiers, who, with his division, should have marched through our pass, but was now, he believed, to conduct them by a different route.

Paul. What noise and commotion is that near the gate? (*Calling to those without.*) Ho there! What is the matter?

1st Peas. (*without.*) Nothing, Father; but we hear a trumpet at a distance, and they say, there is an army marching amongst the mountains.

Jer. By all our holy saints, if it be so—

(*Calling again to the* 1st Peas.)

Are ye sure it is trumpets you hear?

1st Peas. As sure as we ever heard any sound, and here is a lad too, who saw from the top most crag, with his own eyes, their banners waving at a distance.

Jer. (*to* Paul.) What think'st thou of it?

Paul. We must go to the Prior, and reveal the whole to him directly. Our own lives and those of the whole brotherhood depend upon it; there can be no hesitation now.

Jer. Come then; lose no time. We have a solemn duty imposed upon us. [Exeunt.

SCENE II.—AN OPEN SPACE BY THE GATE OF THE MONASTERY, WITH A VIEW OF THE BUILDING ON ONE SIDE, WHILE ROCKS AND MOUNTAINS, WILDLY GRAND, APPEAR IN EVERY OTHER DIRECTION, AND A NARROW PASS THROUGH THE MOUNTAINS OPENING TO THE BOTTOM OF THE STAGE.

Several PEASANTS, both MEN and WOMEN, are discovered, waiting as if to see some sight; a Trumpet and warlike Music heard at a little distance.

1st Peas. Hear how it echoes amongst the rocks: it is your true warlike sound, that makes a man's heart stir within him, and his feet beat the ground to its measure.

2d Peas. Ah! what have our hearts to do with it now, miserable as we are!

1st Peas. What have we to do with it! Speak for thyself. Were I to be laid in the grave this very night, it would rouse me to hear those sounds which remind me of the battle of Laupen.

2d Peas. Well; look not so proudly at me: though I have not yet fought for my country, I am of a good stock nevertheless: my father lost his life at Morgarten.

(*Calling up to* Morand, *who now appears scrambling down the sides of the rocks.*)

Are they near us, Lieutenant?

Mor. They'll be here in a trice. I know their Ensigns already: they are those brave fellows under the command of Count Osterloo, who did such good service to the Emperor in his last battle.

3d Peas. (*Woman.*) Aye; they be goodly men no doubt, and bravely accoutred I warrant ye.

4th Peas. (*Old Woman.*) Aye, there be many a brave man amongst them I trow, returning to his mother again. My Hubert never returned.

2d Peas. (*to* Mor.) Count Osterloo! Who is he?

Mor. Did'st thou never hear of him? He has been in as many battles as thou hast been in harvest fields.

2d Peas. And won them too?

Mor. Nay, some of them he has won, and some he has lost; but whether his own side were fighting or flying, he always kept his ground, or retreated like a man. The enemy never saw his back.

1st Peas. True, Lieutenant; I once knew an old soldier of Osterloo's who boasted much of his General: for his men are proud of him, and would go through flood and flame for his sake.

Mor. Yes, he is affable and indulgent to them, although passionate and unreasonable when provoked; and has been known to punish even his greatest favourites severely for a slight offence. I remember well, the officer I first served under, being a man of this kidney, and——

1st Peas. Hist, hist! the gates are thrown

open; and yonder come the Monks in procession with the Prior at their head.

Enter PRIOR and MONKS from the Monastery, and range themselves on one side of the stage.

Prior. (*to the* Peasants.) Retire, my Children, and don't come so near us. Don't stand near the soldiers as they pass neither, but go to your houses.

1st Woman. O bless St. Maurice and your holy reverence! We see nothing now, but coffins and burials, and hear nothing but the ticking of the death-watch, and the tolling of bells: do let us stand here and look at the brave sight. Lord knows if any of us may be above ground to see such another, a'n it were to pass this way but a week hence.

Prior. Be it so then, Daughter, but keep at a distance on the rocks, where you may see every thing without communicating infection.

(*The* Peasants *retire, climbing amongst the rocks: then enter by the narrow pass at the bottom of the stage,* Soldiers *marching to martial music, with* Officers *and* Osterloo.)

Prior. (*advancing, and lifting up his hands with solemnity.*)
Soldiers and Officers, and the noble chief commanding this band! in the name of our patron St. Maurice, once like yourselves a valiant soldier upon earth, now a holy, powerful saint in heaven, I conjure you to halt.

1st Off. (*in the foremost rank.*) Say you so, reverend Prior, to men pressing forward as we do, to shelter our head for the night, and that cold wintry sun going down so fast upon us?

1st Sold. By my faith! if we pass the night here amongst the mountains, it will take something besides prayers and benedictions to keep us alive.

2d Sold. Spend the night here amonst chamois and eagles! Some miracle no doubt will be wrought for our accommodation.

1st Off. Murmur not, my Friends: here comes your General, who is always careful of you.

Ost. (*advancing from the rear.*)
What is the matter?

Prior. (*to* Ost.) You are the commander in chief?

Ost. Yes, reverend Father: and, with all respect and deference, let me say, the night advances fast upon us, Martigny is still at a good distance, and we must not be detained. With many thanks, then, for your intended civilities, we beg your prayers, holy Prior, with those of your pious Monks, and crave leave to pass on our way.

Prior. (*lifting his hands as before.*) If there be any piety in brave men, I conjure you in the name of St. Maurice to halt! The lives of our whole community depend upon it: men, who for your lives have offered to heaven many prayers.

Ost. How may this be, my Lord? Who will attack your sacred walls, that you should want any defence?

Prior. We want not, General, the service of your arms: my own troops, with the brave Captain who commands them, are sufficient to defend us from mortal foes.

Soldiers. (*murmuring.*) Must we fight with devils then?

Ost. Be quiet, my good Comrades. (*To* Prior.) Well, my Lord, proceed.

Prior. A fatal pestilence rages in this neighbourhood; and by command of a vision, which has appeared three times to the Senior of our order, and also to another of our brotherhood, threatening in case of disobedience, that the whole community shall fall victims to the dreadful disease, we are compelled to conjure you to halt.

Ost. And for what purpose?

Prior. That we may choose by lot from the first division of the Imperial army which marches through this pass, (so did the vision precisely direct us,) a man, who shall spend one night within the walls of our monastery; there to undergo certain penances for the expiation of long-concealed guilt.

Ost. This is very strange. By lot did you say? It will be tedious. There are a hundred of my men who will volunteer the service — What say ye, Soldiers?

1st Sold. Willingly, General, if you desire it. Yet I marvel what greater virtue there can be in beleagring the war-worn hide of a poor soldier, than the fat sides of a well-fed monk.

Ost. Wilt thou do it, then?

1st Sold. Aye; and more than that, willingly, for my General. It is not the first time a cat-o'-nine-tails has been across my back for other men's misdeeds. Promise me a good flask of brandy when I'm done with it, and I warrant ye I'll never winch. As to the saying of Pater-nosters, if there be any thing of that kind tacked to it, I let you to wit my dexterity is but small.

Ost. Then be it as thou wilt, my good friend; yet I had as lief my own skin should smart for it as thine, thou art such a valiant fellow.

Prior. No, noble General, this must not be; we must have our man chosen by lot. The lives of the whole community depending upon it; we must strictly obey the vision.

Ost. It will detain us long.

Prior. Nay, my Lord; the lots are already prepared. In the first place, six men only shall draw; four representing the soldiers, and two the officers. If the soldiers are taken, they shall draw by companies, and the company that is taken shall draw individually; but if the lot falls to the officers, each of them shall draw for himself.

Ost. Let it be so; you have arranged it well. Produce the lots.

(*The* Prior *giving the sign, a* Monk *advances, bearing a stand, on which are placed three vases, and sets it near the front of the stage.*)

Prior. Now, brave Soldiers, let four from your body advance.

(Ost. *points to four men, who advance from the ranks.*)

Ost. And two from the officers, my Lord?

Prior. Even so, noble Count.

(Ost. *then points to two* Officers, *who, with the four* Soldiers, *draw lots from the smallest vase directed by the* Prior.)

1st Sold. (*speaking to his comrades as the others are drawing.*) This is strange mummery i' faith! but it would have been no joke, I suppose, to have offended St. Maurice.

Prior. (*after examining the lots.*) Soldiers, ye are free; it is your Officers who are taken.

1st Sold. (*as before.*) Ha! the vision is dainty it seems: it is not vulgar blood like ours, that will serve to stain the ends of his holy lash.

(*A* Monk *having removed two of the vases, the* Prior *beckons the* Officers *to draw from the remaining one.*

Prior. Stand not on order; let him who is nearest put in his hand first.

1st Sold. (*aside to the others as the* Officers *are drawing.*) Now by these arms! I would give a month's pay that the lot should fall on our prim pompous lieutenant. It would be well worth the money to look in at one of their narrow windows, and see his dignified backbone winching under the hands of a good brawny friar.

Ost. (*aside, unrolling his lot.*)
Mighty heaven! Is fate or chance in this?

1st Off. (*aside to* Ost.) Have you got it, General? Change it for mine if you have.

Ost. No no, my noble Albert: let us be honest; but thanks to thy generous friendship!

Prior. Now shew the lots. (*All the Officers shew their lots, excepting* Osterloo, *who continues gloomy and thoughtful.*) Has no one drawn the sable scroll of election? (*To* Osterloo.) You are silent, my Lord; of what color is your lot?

Ost. (*holding out his scroll.*) Black as midnight.

(Soldiers *quit their ranks and crowd round* Osterloo, *tumultuously.*)

1st Sold. Has it fallen upon our General; 'tis a damned lot—an unfair lot.

2d Sold. We will not leave him behind us, though a hundred St. Maurices commanded it.

3d Sold. Get within your walls again, ye cunning Friars.

1st Sold. A'n we should lie i' the open air all night, we will not leave brave Osterloo behind us.

Prior. (*to* Ost.) Count, you seem gloomy and irresolute: have the goodness to silence these clamors. I am in truth as sorry as any of your soldiers can be, that the lot has fallen upon you.

1st Off. (*aside to* Ost.) Nay, my noble friend, let me fulfil this penance in your stead. It is not now a time for scruples: the soldiers will be mutinous.

Ost. Mutinous! Soldiers, return to your ranks. (*Looking at them sternly as they seem unwillingly to obey.*) Will you brave me so far that I must repeat my command?

(*They retire.*)

I thank thee, dear Albert. (*To 1st* Off.) Thou shalt do something in my stead; but it shall not be the service thou thinkest of. (*To* Prior.) Reverend Father, I am indeed somewhat struck at being marked out by fate from so many men; but, as to how I shall act thereupon, no wise irresolute. (*To the* Sold.) Continue your march. The brave Albert shall conduct you to Martigny; and there you will remain under his command, till I join you again.

1st Sold. God preserve you then, my noble General! and if you do not join us again by to-morrow evening, safe and sound, we will not leave one stone of that building standing on another.

Many Soldiers at once. So swear we all! So swear, &c.

Ost. (*assuming a cheerful look.*)
Go to, foolish Fellows! Were you to leave me in a den of lions, you could not be more apprehensive. Will watching all night by some holy shrine, or walking bare-foot through their midnight aisles, be such a hardship to one, who has passed so many nights with you all on the cold field of battle? Continue your march without delay; else these good fathers will count you no better than a band of new raised city troops, with some jolly tankard-chief for your leader. A good march to you, my friends, with kind hostesses and warm fire-sides where you are going.

1st Sold. Ah! What good will our fire-sides do us, when we think how our General is lodged.

Ost. Farewell! March on as quickly as you may; you shall all drink my health to-morrow evening in a good hogshead of rhenish.

1st Sold. (*with others.*) God grant we may! (*1st to* Prior.) Look to it, reverend Prior: if our General be not with us by to-morrow's sunset, St. Maurice will neither have monastery nor monks on this mountain.

Ost. No more! (*Embracing first Officer, and shaking hands with others.*) Farewell! Farewell!

(*The* Soldiers, *after giving him a loud cheer march off with their* Officers *to martial music, and* EXEUNT Osterloo, Prior, *and* Monks *into the monastery, while the* Peasants *disappear amongst the rocks.* MANENT Morand *and* Agnes, *who has for some time appeared, looking over a crag.*)

Ag. Morand, Morand!

Mor. Ha! art thou there? I might have guessed indeed, that so brave a sight would not escape thee. What made thee perch thyself like an eagle upon such a crag as that?

Ag. Chide not, good Morand, but help me down, lest I pay a dearer price for my

sight than thou, with all thy grumbling, would'st wish. (*He helps her down*)

Mor. And now thou art going no doubt to tell the Lady Leonora, what a band of gallant fellows thou hast seen.

Ag. Assuredly, if I can find in my heart to speak of any but their noble leader.—What is his name? What meaning had all that drawing of lots in it? What will the monks do with him? Walk with me a little way towards the castle, brave Morand, and tell me what thou knowest.

Mor. I should walk to the castle and miles beyond it too, ere I could answer so many questions, and I have duty in the monastery, besides.

Ag. Come with me a little way, at least.

Mor. Ah, Witch! thou knowest too well that I must always do what thou biddest me.

[Exeunt.

Scene III. THE REFECTORY OF THE MONASTERY, WITH A SMALL TABLE, ON WHICH ARE PLACED REFRESHMENTS, DISCOVERED IN ONE CORNER.

Enter Osterloo, Prior, Benedict, Jerome, and Paul, &c.

Prior Noble Osterloo, let me welcome you here, as one appointed by heaven to purchase our deliverance from this dreadful malady; and I hope the price to be paid for it will not be a heavy one. Yet ere we proceed further in this matter, be entreated, I pray, to take some refreshment after your long march.

(*The table is placed near the front of the stage.*)

Ost. I thank you, my Lord: this is a gentle beginning to my penance. I will. then, by your leave. (*Sitting down at the table.*) I have fasted long, and am indeed somewhat exhausted. (*After taking some refreshment.*) Ah! My poor Soldiers! You must still endure two hours' weary march, before you find such indulgence. Your wine is good, reverend Father

Prior I am glad you find it so: it is old.

Ost. (*cheerfully.*) And your viands are good too; and your bread is delicious. (*Drinking another cup.*) I shall have vigor now for any thing.——Pray tell me something more of this wonderful vision: was it a Saint or an Angel that appeared to the Senior Brother?

Prior. (*pointing to Jerome.*) He will answer for himself, and (*pointing to* Paul.) this man saw it also.

Jer. It was neither Angel nor Saint, noble Count, but a mortal form wonderfully noble.

Ost. And it appeared to you in the usual manner of a dream.

Jer. It did; at least I know no sensible distinction. A wavy envelopement of darkness preceded it, from which appearances seemed dimly to wake into form, till all was presented before me in the full strength of reality.

Paul. Nay, Brother, it broke upon me at once; a vivid distinct apparition.

Ost. Well, be that as it may; what did appear to you? A mortal man, and very noble?

Jer. Yes, General. Methought I was returning from mass, through the cloisters that lead from the chapel, when a figure, as I have said, appeared to me, and beckoned me to follow it I did follow it; for at first I was neither afraid, nor even surprised; but so wonderfully it rose in stature and dignity as it strode before me, that, ere it reached the door of the stranger's burying vault, I was struck with unaccountable awe.

Ost. The stranger's burying vault!

Prior. Does any sudden thought strike you, Count?

Ost. No, no! here's your health, Fathers: (*drinking.*) your wine is excellent.

Prior. But that is water you have just now swallowed: this is the wine.

Ost. Ha! is it? No matter, no matter! it is very good too. (*A long pause;* Osterloo *with his eyes fixed thoughtfully on the ground.*)

Prior. Shall not our Brother proceed with his story, General?

Ost. Most certainly: I have been listening for it.

Jer. Well then, as I have said, at the door of the stranger's burying vault it stopped, and beckoned me again. It entered, and I followed it. There, through the damp mouldering tombs, it strode still before me, till it came to the farther extremity, as nearly as I could guess, two yards westward from the black marble monument; and then stopping and turning on me its fixed and ghastly eyes, it stretched out its hands——

Ost. Its hands! Did you say its hands?

Jer. It stretched out one of them; the other was covered with its mantle; and in a voice that sounded—I know not how it sounded——

Paul. Aye, Brother; it was something like a voice, at least it conveyed words to the mind, though it was not like a voice neither.

Jer. Be that as you please: these words it solemnly uttered—"Command the Brothers of this monastery, on pain of falling victims to the pestilence now devastating the country, to stop on its way the first division of the Imperial army that shall march through your mountain pass; and choose from it, by lot, a man who shall abide one night within these walls, to make expiation for long concealed guilt. Let the suffering be such as the nature of the crime and the connection of the expiator therewith shall dictate. This spot of earth shall reveal—" It said no more, but bent its eyes steadfastly upon me with a frown, which became, as it looked, keener than the looks of any mortal being, and vanished from my sight.

Paul. Aye, that look: that last terrible

look! it awoke me with terror, and I know not how it vanished.

Jer. this has been repeated to me three times; last night twice in the course of the night, while brother Paul here was at the same time terrified with a similar apparition.

Prior. This, you will acknowledge, Count, was no common visitation, and could not but trouble us.

Ost. You say well.——Yet it was but a dream.

Prior. True; it was but a dream, and as such these pious men strove to consider it; when the march of your troops across our mountains, a thing so unlikely to happen, compelled them to reveal to me, without loss of time, what had appeared to them.

Ost. A tall figure, you say, and of a noble aspect?

Jer. Like that of a King, though habited more in the garb of a foreign soldier of fortune than of a state so dignified.

(Osterloo *rises from the table agitated.*)

Prior. What is the matter, General? Will you not finish your repast?

Ost. I thank you; I have had enough. The night grows cold; I would rather walk than sit.

(*Going hastily to the bottom of the stage, and pacing to and fro.*)

Jer. (*aside to* Paul *and the* Prior.) What think ye of this?

Prior. (*aside to* Jerome.) His countenance changed several times as he listened to you: there is something here different from common surprise on hearing a wonderful thing.

Enter a PEASANT, by the bottom of the stage, bearing a torch.

Peas. (*eagerly as he enters.*) We have found it.

Ost. (*stopping short in his walk.*) What hast thou found?

Peas. What the Prior desired us to dig for.

Ost. What is that?

Peas. A grave.

(Osterloo *turns from him suddenly, and paces up and down very rapidly.*)

Prior. (*to* Peas.) Thou hast found it?

Peas. Aye, please you, and in the very spot, near the black monument, where your reverence desired us to dig. And it is well you sent for my kinsman and I to do it, for there is not a lay-brother in the monastery strong enough to raise up the great stones that covered it.

Prior. In the very spot, sayest thou?

Peas. In the very spot.

Prior. Bear thy torch before us, and we'll follow thee.

Omnes. (*eagerly,* Osterloo *excepted.*) Let us go immediately.

Prior. (*to* Osterloo *who stands fixed to the spot.*) Will not Count Osterloo go also? It is fitting that he should.

Ost. rousing himself.) O, most assuredly: I am perfectly ready to follow you.

[EXEUNT.

ACT II.

SCENE I.—A BURYING VAULT, ALMOST TOTALLY DARK; THE MONUMENTS AND GRAVE STONES BEING SEEN VERY DIMLY BY THE LIGHT OF A SINGLE TORCH, STUCK BY THE SIDE OF A DEEP OPEN GRAVE, IN WHICH A SEXTON IS DISCOVERED, STANDING LEANING ON HIS MATTOCK, AND MORAND, ABOVE GROUND, TURNING UP, WITH HIS SHEATHED SWORD, THE LOOSE EARTH ABOUT THE MOUTH OF THE GRAVE.

Mor. There is neither scull nor bone among this earth: the ground must have been newly broken up, when that coffin was let down into it.

Sex. So one should think; but the earth here has the quality of consuming whatever is put into it, in a marvellous short time.

Mor. Aye; the flesh and more consumable parts of a body; but hath it grinders in its jaws, like your carnivorous animal, to crash up bones and all? I have seen bones on an old field of battle, some hundred years after the action, lying whitened and hard in the sun.

Sex. Well, a'nt be new ground, I'll warrant ye somebody has paid money enough for such a good tenement as this: I could not wish my own father a better.

Mor. (*looking down.*) The coffin is of an uncommon size: there must be a leaden one within it, I should think.

Sex. I doubt that: it is only a clumsy shell that has been put together in haste; and I'll be hanged if he who made it ever made another before it. Now it would pine me with vexation to think I should be laid in such a bungled piece of workmanship as this.

Mor. Aye: it is well for those who shall bury thee, Sexton, that thou wilt not be a looker on at thine own funeral.——Put together in haste, sayest thou! How long may it be since this coffin was laid in the ground?

Sex. By my say, now, I cannot tell; though many a grave I have dug in this vault, instead of the lay-brothers, who are mighty apt to take a colic or shortness of breath, or the like, when any thing of hard labour falls to their share. (*After pausing.*) Ha, now! I have it. When I went over the mountain some ten years ago to visit my father-in-law, Baldwick, the stranger who died the other day, after living so long as a hermit amongst the rocks, came here; and it was shrewdly suspected he had leave from our late Prior, for a good sum of money, to bury a body privately in this vault. I was a fool not to think

of it before. This, I'll be sworn for it, is the place.

Enter the PRIOR, OSTERLOO, JEROME, PAUL, BENEDICT, and other MONKS, with the PEASANT carrying lights before them. They enter by an arched door at the bottom of the stage, and walk on to the front, when every one, but OSTERLOO, crowds eagerly to the grave, looking down into it.

Prior. (*to* Sexton.) What hast thou found, friend?

Sex. A coffin a'nt please you, and of a size, too, that might almost contain a giant.

Omnes. (Osterloo *excepted.*) The inscription—is there an inscription on it?

Sex. No, no! They who put these planks together had no time for inscriptions.

Omnes. (*as before.*) Break it open:—break it open.

(*They crowd more eagerly about the grave, when, after a pause, the* Sexton *is heard wrenching open the lid of the coffin.*)

Omnes. (*as before.*) What is there in it? What hast thou found, Sexton?

Sex. An entire skeleton, and of no common size.

Ost. (*in a quick hollow voice.*) Is it entire?

Sex. (*after a pause.*) No, the right hand is wanting, and there is not a loose bone in the coffin. (Ost. *shudders and steps back.*)

Jer. (*to* Prior, *after a pause.*) Will you not speak to him, Father? His countenance is changed, and his whole frame seems moved by some sudden convulsion.

(*The Prior remains silent.*)

How is this? You are also changed, reverend Father. Shall I speak to him?

Prior. Speak thou to him.

Jer. (*to* Osterloo.) What is the matter with you, General? Has some sudden malady seized you?

Ost. (*to* Jerome.) Let me be alone with you, holy Prior; let me be alone with you instantly.

Jer. (*pointing.*) This is the Prior.—He would be alone with you, Father: he would make his confession to you.

Prior. I dare not hear him alone: there must be witnesses. Let him come with me to my apartment.

Jer. (*to* Osterloo, *as they leave the grave.*) Let me conduct you, Count.

(*After walking from it some paces.*)

Come on, my Lord; why do you stop short?

Ost. Not this way—not this way, I pray you.

Jer. What is it you would avoid?

Ost. Turn aside, I pray you, I cannot cross over this.

Jer. Is it the grave you mean? We have left it behind us.

Ost. Is it not there? It yawns across our path, directly before us.

Jer. Indeed, my Lord, it is some paces behind.

Ost. There is delusion in my sight then; lead me as thou wilt. [EXEUNT.

SCENE II.—THE PRIVATE APARTMENT OF THE PRIOR.

Enter BENEDICT, looking round as he enters.

Ben. Not yet come; aye, penitence is not very swift of foot. (*Speaking to himself as he walks up and down.*) Miserable man!—brave, goodly creature:—but alas, alas! most subdued; most miserable; and, I fear, most guilty!

Enter JEROME.

Jerome here!—Dost thou know, Brother, that the Prior is coming here immediately to confess the penitent?

Jer. Yes, brother; but I am no intruder; for he has summoned me to attend the confession as well as thyself.

Ben. Methinks some other person of our order, unconcerned with the dreaming part of this business, would have been a less suspicious witness.

Jer. Suspicious! Am I more concerned in this than any other member of our community? Heaven appoints its own agents as it listeth: the stones of these walls might have declared its awful will as well as the dreams of a poor friar.

Ben. True, brother Jerome; could they listen to confessions as he does, and hold reveries upon them afterwards.

Jer. What dost thou mean with thy reveries and confessions? Did not Paul see the terrible vision as well as I?

Ben. If thou hadst not revealed thy dream to him, he would have slept sound enough, or, at worst, have but flown over the pinnacles with his old mate the horned serpent, as usual: and had the hermit Baldwick, never made his death-bed confession to thee, thou would'st never have had such a dream to reveal.

Jer. Thinkest thou so? Then what brought Osterloo and his troops so unexpectedly by this route? With all thy heretical dislike to miraculous interposition, how wilt thou account for this?

Ben. If thou hadst no secret intelligence of Osterloo's route, to set thy fancy a working on the story the hermit confessed to thee, I never wore cowl on my head.

Jer. Those, indeed, who hear thee speak so lightly of mysterious and holy things, will scarcely believe thou ever didst.—But hush! the Prior comes with his penitent; let us have no altercation now.

Enter PRIOR and OSTERLOO.

Prior. (*after a pause, in which he seems agitated.*) Now, Count Osterloo, we are ready to hear your confession. To myself and these pious Monks; men appointed by our holy religion to search into the crimes of the penitent, unburthen your heart of its terrible secret; and God grant you afterwards, if it be his righteous will, repentance and mercy.

Ost. (*making a sign, as if unable to speak: then uttering rapidly.*) Presently, presently.

Jer. Don't hurry him, reverend Father; he cannot speak.

Ben. Take breath awhile, noble Osterloo, and speak to us when you can.

Ost. I thank you.

Ben. He is much agitated. (*To* Osterloo.) Lean upon me, my Lord.

Prior. (*to* Benedict.) Nay, you exceed in this. (*To* Osterloo.) Recollect yourself, General, and try to be more composed. You seem better now; endeavour to unburden your mind of its fatal secret; to have it labouring within your breast is protracting a state of misery.

Ost. (*feebly.*) I have voice now.

Jer. (*to* Osterloo.) Give to Heaven then, as you ought——

Ben. Hush, brother Jerome! no exhortations now! let him speak it as he can. (*To* Osterloo.) We attend to you most anxiously.

Ost. (*after struggling for utterance.*) I slew him.

Prior. The man whose bones have now been discovered?

Ost. The same: I slew him.

Jer. In the field, Count?

Ost. No, no! many a man's blood has been on my hands there:—this is on my heart.

Prior. It is then premeditated murder you have committed.

Ost. (*hastily.*) Call it so, call it so.

Jer. (*to* Osterloo, *after a pause.*) And is this all? Will you not proceed to tell us the circumstances attending it?

Ost. Oh! they were terrible!—But they are all in my mind as the indistinct horrors of a frenzied imagination. (*After a short pause.*) I did it in a narrow pass on St. Gothard, in the stormy twilight of a winter day.

Prior. You murdered him there?

Ost. I felt him dead under my grasp; but I looked at him no more after the last desperate thrust that I gave him. I hurried to a distance from the spot: when a servant, who was with me, seized with a sudden remorse, begged leave to return and remove the body, that, if possible, he might bury it in consecrated ground, as an atonement for the part he had taken in the terrible deed.——I gave him leave, with means to procure his desire:—I waited for him three days, concealed in the mountains;—but I neither saw him, nor heard of him again.

Ben. But what tempted a brave man like Osterloo to commit such a horrible act?

Ost. The torments of jealousy stung me to it. (*Hiding his face with his hands and then uncovering it.*) I loved her, and was beloved:——He came,—a noble stranger——

Jer. Aye, if he was in his mortal state, as I in my dream beheld him, he was indeed most noble.

Ost. (*waving his hand impatiently.*) Well, well! he did come, then, and she loved me no more.——With arts and enchantments he besotted her.——————Even from her own lips I received——

(*Tossing up his arms violently, and then covering his face as before.*)

But what is all this to you? Maimed as he was, having lost his right arm in a battle with the Turks, I could not defy him to the field. ——————After passing two nights in all the tossing agony of a damned spirit, I followed him on his journey 'cross the mountains.—On the twilight of the second day, I laid wait for him in a narrow pass; and as soon as his gigantic form darkened the path before me————I have told you all.

Prior. (*eagerly.*) You have not told his name.

Ost. Did I not say Montera? He was a noble Hungarian.

Prior. (*much agitated.*) He was so!—He was so. He was noble and beloved.

Jer. (*aside to* Prior.) What is the matter with you, reverend Father? Was he your Friend?

Prior. (*aside to* Jerome.) Speak not to me now, but question the murderer as ye will.

Ben. (*overhearing the* Prior.) He is indeed a murderer, reverend Father, but he is our penitent.

Prior. Go to! what are names?—Ask him what questions you will, and finish the confession quickly.

Ben. (*to* Osterloo.) But have you never till now confessed this crime; nor in the course of so many years reflected on its dreadful turpitude?

Ost. The active and adventurous life of a soldier is most adverse to reflection: but often, in the stillness of midnight, the remembrance of this terrible deed has come powerfully upon me; till morning returned, and the noise of the camp began, and the fortunes of the day were before me.

Prior. (*in a severe voice.*) Thou hast indeed been too long permitted to remain in this hardened state. But Heaven, sooner or later, will visit the man of blood with its terrours. Sooner or later, he shall feel that he stands upon an awful brink; and short is the step which engulphs him in that world, where the murdered and the murderer meet again, in the tremendous presence of him, who is the Lord and giver of life.

Ost. You believe then in such severe retribution?

Prior. I believe in it as in my own existence.

Ost. (*turning to* Jerome *and* Benedict.) And you, good Fathers, you believe in this?

Ben. Nature teaches this as well as revelation: we must believe it.

Jer. Some presumptuous minds, dazzled with the sunshine of prosperity, have dared to doubt; but to us, in the sober shade of life; visited too, as we have now been, by visions preternatural and awful, it is a thing of certainty, rather than of faith.

Ost. That such things are!—It makes the

brain confused and giddy.—These are tremendous thoughts. (*Leans his back against the wall, and gazes fixedly on the ground.*)

Prior. Let us leave him to the bitterness of his thoughts. We now must deliberate with the brethren on what is to be done. There must be no delay: the night advances fast. Conduct him to another apartment: I must assemble a council of the whole order.

Jer. (*to* Osterloo.) We must lead you to another apartment, Count, while we consider what is to be done.

Ost. (*roused.*) Aye, the expiation you mean: let it be severe; if atonement in this world may be made.
(*Turning to* Prior *as* Jerome *leads him off.*) Let your expiation be severe, holy Father: a slight penance matches not with such a crime as mine.

Prior. Be well assured it shall be what it ought.

Ost. (*Turning again and catching hold of the* Prior's *robe.*) I regard not bodily pain. In battle once, with the head of a broken arrow in my thigh, I led on the charge, and sustained all the exertions of a well-fought field, till night closed upon our victory. Let your penance be severe, my reverend Father; I have been long acquainted with pain.

[Exeunt Osterloo *and* Jerome.

Ben. You seem greatly moved, Father; but it is not with pity for the wretched. You would not destroy such a man as this, though his crime is the crime of blood?

Prior. He shall die: ere another sun dawn on these walls, he shall die.

Ben. Oh, say not so! Think of some other expiation.

Prior. I would think of another, were there any other more dreadful to him than death.

Ben. He is your penitent.

Prior. He is the murderer of my brother.

Ben. Then Heaven have mercy on him, if he must find none here?——————
Montero was your brother?

Prior. My only brother. It were tedious to tell thee now, how I was separated from him after the happy days of our youth.———
I saw him no more; yet he was still the dearest object of my thoughts. After escaping death in many a battle, he was slain, as it was conjectured, by banditti, in travelling across the mountains. His body was never discovered. Ah! little did I think it was lying so near me!

Ben. It is indeed piteous; and you must needs feel it as a brother: but consider the danger we run, should we lay violent hands on an Imperial General, with his enraged soldiers, within a few hours' march of our walls.

Prior. I can think of nothing but revenge. Speak to me no more. I must assemble the whole order immediately. [Exeunt.

Scene III.—another apartment.

Enter Osterloo as from a small recess at the bottom of the Stage, pacing backwards and forwards several times in an agitated manner; then advancing slowly to the front, where he stands musing and muttering to himself for some moments, before he speaks aloud.

Ost. That this smothered horrour should burst upon me at last! And there be really such things as the darkened fancy imageth to itself, when the busy day is stilled.—An unseen world surrounds us: spirits and powers, and the invisible dead hover near us; while we in unconscious security—Oh! I have slept upon a fearful brink! Every sword that threatened my head in battle, had power in its edge to rend me to a terrible account.—I have slept upon a fearful brink.——————
Am I truly awake? (*Rubbing his eyes, then grasping several parts of his body, first with one hand and then with the other.*) Yes, yes! it is so!—I am keenly and terribly awake.

(*Paces rapidly up and down, and then stopping short.*) Can there be virtue in penances suffered by the body to do away offences of the soul? If there be—O if there be! let them runnel my body with stripes; and swaith me round in one continued girth of wounds! Any thing that can be endured here, is mercy compared to the dreadful abiding of what may be hereafter.

Enter Wovelreid, behind followed by Soldiers, who range themselves at the bottom of the stage. Osterloo turning round, runs up to him eagerly.

Ha! my dear Albert, returned to me again, with all my noble fellows at thy back!———
————Pardon me; I mistook you for one of my Captains.

Wov. I am the Prior's Captain.

Ost. And those men too?

Wov. They are the Prior's Soldiers, who have been ordered from distant quarters to repair to the monastery immediately.

Ost. In such haste?

Wov. Aye, in truth! We received our orders after sun-set, and have marched two good leagues since.

Ost. What may this mean?

Wov. Faith I know not. My duty is to obey the Prior, and pray to our good saint; and whether I am commanded to surprise the strong hold of an enemy, or protect an execution, it is the same thing to me.

Ost. An execution! can ought of this nature be intended?

Wov. You turn pale, Sir: wearing the garb of a soldier, you have surely seen blood ere now.

Ost. I have seen too much blood.

Enter Prior, Jerome, Paul, and Monks, walking in order; the Prior holding a paper in his hand.

Prior. (*with solemnity.*) Count Osterloo, Lieutenant-General of our liege Lord the Emperor; authorized by this deed, which is subscribed by all the brethren of our Holy Order here present, I pronounce to you our solemn decision, that the crime of murder,

as, by the mysterious voice of Heaven, and your own confession, your crime is proved to be, can only be expiated by death: you are therefore warned to prepare yourself to die this night. Before day-break, you must be with the inhabitants of another world; where may the great Maker of us all deal with you in mercy!

(Osterloo *staggers back from the spot where he stood, and remains silent.*)

Prior. It is a sentence, Count, pronounced against you from necessity, to save the lives of our whole community, which you yourself have promised to submit to; have you any thing to say in reply to it.

Ost. Nothing: my thoughts are gone from me in the darkness of astonishment.

Prior. We are compelled to be thus hasty and severe: ere day-break, you must die.

Ost. Ere day-break! not even the light of another sun, to one so ill prepared for the awful and tremendous fate into which you would thrust him! this is inhuman! It is horrible!

Prior. He was as ill prepared for it, who, with still shorter warning, was thrust into that awful state in the narrow pass of St. Gothard.

Ost. The guilt of murder was not on his soul. ——————Nay, nay, holy Prior! consider this horrible extremity: let the pain of the executioner's stroke be twenty fold upon me; but thrust me not forth to that state from which my soul recoils with unutterable hor-

——————————————

Never but once, to save the life of a friend, did I bend the knee to mortal man in humble supplication. I am a Soldier; in many battles I have bled for the service of my country: I am a Soldier, and I was a proud one; yet do I thus———Contemn not my extremity! my knee is on the ground.

Prior. Urge me no farther. It must not be; no respite can be granted.

Ost. (*starting up furiously from the ground, and drawing his sword.*)

Then subdue as you may, stern Priest, the strength of a desperate man.

(Wovelreid *and* Soldiers *rush forward, getting behind him, and surrounding him on every side, and after a violent struggle disarm him.*)

Wov. What a noble fellow this would be to defend a narrow breach, though he shrinks with such abhorrence from a scaffold. It is a piteous thing to see him so beset.

Prior. (*to* Wovelreid.) What sayest thou, Fool!

Wov. Nay, it is no business of mine, my Lord, I confess. Shall we conduct him to the prison chamber?

Prior. Do so; and see that he retains no concealed arms about him.

Wov. I obey, my Lord: every thing shall be made secure.

(Exit Osterloo, *guarded by* Wovelreid *and* Soldiers, *and, at the same time, enter* Benedict, *by the opposite side, who stands looking after him piteously.*)

Prior. (*Sternly to* Benedict.) What brings thee here? Dost thou repent having refused to concur with us in an act that preserves the community?

Ben. Say rather, reverend Father, an act that revenges your brother's death, which the laws of the empire should revenge.

Prior. A supernatural visitation of Heaven hath commanded us to punish it.——————What; dost thou shake thy head? Thou art of a doubting and dangerous spirit; and beware lest, sooner or later, the tempter do not lure thee into heresy. If reason cannot subdue thee, authority shall.——————Return again to thy cell; let me hear of this no more.

Ben. I will, reverend Father. But for the love of our holy saint, bethink you, ere it be too late, that though we may be saved from the pestilence by this bloody sacrifice, what will rescue our throats from the swords of Osterloo's soldiers, when they shall return, as they have threatened, to demand from us their General?

Prior. Give thyself no concern about this. My own bands are already called in, and a messenger has been dispatched to the Abbess Matilda; her troops, in defence of the church, will face the best soldiers of the empire.——But why lose we time in unprofitable contentions? Go, my Sons, (*speaking to other* Monks,) the night advances fast, and we have much to do ere morning. (*Knocking heard without.*) Ha! who knocks at this untimely hour? Can the soldiers be indeed returned upon us?—Run to the gate, but open it to none.

[Exeunt *several in haste, and presently re-enter with a lay-brother.*

Lay-B. Please ye, reverend Father; the Marchioness has sent a messenger from the castle, beseeching you to send a Confessor immediately to confess one of her women, who was taken ill yesterday, and is now at the point of death.

Prior. I'm glad it is only this.—What is the matter with the penitent?

Lay-B. I know not, please you; the messenger only said, she was taken ill yesterday.

Prior. (*shaking his head.*) Aye, this malady has got there also.—I cannot send one of the Brothers to bring infection immediately amongst us.——————What is to be done? Leonora is a most noble Lady; and the family have been great benefactors to our order.—I must send somebody to her. But he must stop well his nostrils with spicery, and leave his upper garment behind him, when he quits the infected apartment. Jerome, wilt thou go? Thou art the favorite Confessor with all the women at the castle.

Jer. Nay, Father; I must attend on our prisoner here, who has most need of ghostly assistance.

Prior. (*to another* Monk.) Go thou Anselmo; thou hast given comfort to many a dying penitent.

Monk. I thank you, Father, for the preference; but Paul is the best of us all for ad-

ministering comfort to the dying; and there is a sickness come over my heart, o'the sudden, that makes me unfit for the office.

Prior. (*to* Paul.) Thou wilt go then, my good Son.

Paul. I beseech you, don't send me, reverend Father; I ne'er escaped contagion in my life, where malady or fever were to be had.

Prior. Who will go then?

(*A deep silence*.)

Ben. What; has no one faith enough in the protection of St. Maurice, even purchased, as it is about to be, by the shedding of human blood, to venture upon this dangerous duty? I will go then, Father, though I am sometimes of a doubting spirit.

Prior. Go, and St. Maurice protect thee!

[Exit Ben.

Let him go; it is well that we get rid of him for the night, should they happily detain him so long at the castle.—He is a troublesome, close-searching, self-willed fellow. He hath no zeal for the order. Were a miser to bequeath his possessions to our monastery, he would assist the disappointed heir himself to find out a flaw in the deed.—But retire to your cells, my Sons; and employ yourselves in prayer and devotion, till the great bell warn you to attend the execution. [Exeunt.

Scene III.—an apartment in the castle.

Enter Leonora and Agnes, speaking as they enter.

Ag. But she is asleep now; and is so much and so suddenly better, that the Confessor, when he comes, will be dissatisfied, I fear, that we have called him from his cell at such an unreasonable hour.

Leo. Let him come, nevertheless; don't send to prevent him,

Ag. He will be unwilling to be detained, for they are engaged in no common matters to-night at the monastery. Count Osterloo, as I told you before, is doing voluntary penance at the shrine of St. Maurice, to stop the progress of this terrible malady.

Leo. I remember thou did'st.

Ag. Ah, Marchioness! you would not say so thus faintly, had you seen him march through the pass with his soldiers. He is the bravest and most graceful man, though somewhat advanced in years, that I ever beheld. —Ah, had you but seen him!

Leo. I have seen him, Agnes.

Ag. And I spoke of him all the while, yet you did not tell me this before! Ah, my noble Mistress and Friend! the complexion of your cheek is altered; you have indeed seen him, and you have not seen him with indifference.

Leo. Think as thou wilt about this. He was the friend and fellow-soldier of my lord, when we first married; though before my marriage I had never seen him.

Ag. Friend! Your lord was then in the decline of life; there must have been great disparity in their friendship.

Leo. They were friends, however; for the Marquis liked society younger than himself; and I, who had been hurried into an unequal marriage, before I could judge for myself, was sometimes foolish enough to compare them together.

Ag. Aye, that was natural enough. (*Eagerly*.) And what happened then?

Leo. (*offended*.) What happened then! (*drawing herself up proudly*.) Nothing happened then, but subduing the foolish fancy of a girl, which was afterwards amply repaid by the self-approbation and dignity of a woman.

Ag. Pardon me, Madam; I ought to have supposed all this. But you have been long a widow, and Osterloo is still unmarried; what prevented you when free.

Leo. I was ignorant what the real state of his sentiments had been in regard to me. But had this been otherwise; received, as I was, into the family of my Lord, the undowried daughter of a petty nobleman; and left as I now am, by his confiding love, the sole guardian of his children and their fortunes; I could never think of supporting a second lord on the wealth entrusted to me by the first, to the injury of his children. As nothing, therefore, has ever happened in consequence of this weakness of my youth, nothing ever shall.

Ag. This is noble.

Leo. It is right.————But here comes the father Confessor.

Enter Benedict.

You are welcome, good Father! yet I am almost ashamed to see you; for our sick person has become suddenly well again, and is now in a deep sleep. I fear I shall appear to you capricious and inconsiderate in calling you up at so late an hour.

Ben. Be not uneasy, lady, upon this account: I am glad to have an occasion for being absent from the monastery for some hours, if you will permit me to remain here so long.

Leo. What mean you, Father Benedict? Your countenance is solemn and sorrowful: what is going on at the monastery? (*He shakes his head*.) Ha! will they be severe with him in a voluntary penance, submitted to for the good of the order?—What is the nature of the penance? It is to continue, I am told, but one night.

Ben. It will, indeed, soon be over.

Leo. And will he be gone on the morrow?

Ben. His spirit will, but his body remains with us forever.

Leo. (*uttering a shriek*.) Death, dost thou mean?—O horror! horror! Is this the expiation? Oh most horrible, most unjust!

Ben. Indeed I consider it as such. Though guilty, by his own confession, of murder, committed, many years since, under the frenzy of

passion; it belongs not to us to inflict the punishment of death upon a guilty soul, taken so suddenly and unprepared for its doom.

Leo. Murder! didst thou say murder! Oh Osterloo, Osterloo! hast thou been so barbarous? and art thou in this terrible state?——Must thou thus end thy days, and so near me too!

Ben. You seem greatly moved, noble Leonora: would you could do something more for him than lament.

Leo. (*catching hold of him eagerly.*) Can I do any thing? Speak, Father: O tell me how! I will do any thing and every thing. ——Alas, alas! my vassals are but few, and cannot be assembled immediately.

Ben. Force were useless. Your vassals, if they were assembled, would not be persuaded to attack the sacred walls of a monastery.

Leo. I did indeed rave foolishly: but what else can be done?—Take these jewels, and every thing of value in the castle, if they will bribe those who guard him, to let him escape. —Think of it.—O think well of it, good Benedict!

Ag. I have heard that there is a secret passage, leading from the prison-chamber of the monastery under its walls, and opening to the free country at the bottom of the rocks.

Ben. By every holy saint, so there is! and the most sordid of our brothers is entrusted with the key of it. But who will be his conductor? None but a monk of the Order may pass the soldiers who guard him; and the Monk who should do it, must fly from his country forever, and break his sacred vows. I can oppose the weak fears and injustice of my brethren, for misfortunes and disgust of the world, not superstitious veneration for monastic sanctity, has covered my head with a cowl; but this I cannot do.

Ag. There is the dress of a Monk of your Order in the old wardrobe of the castle, if some person were disguised in it.

Leo. Thanks to thee! thanks to thee, my happy Agnes! I will be that person.—I will put on the disguise.——————Good Father! your face gives consent to this.

Ben. If there be time; but I left them preparing for the execution.

Leo. There is, there is!—Come with me to the wardrobe, and we'll set out for the monastery forthwith.—Come, come!—a few moments will carry us there.

[Exit, *hastily, followed by* Ag. *and* Ben.

Scene IV.—A wood near the castle; the stage quite dark.

Enter Two Servants, with Torches.

1st Ser. This must surely be the entry to the path, where my lady ordered us to wait for those same Monks.

2d Ser. Yes; I know it well, for yonder is the postern. It is the nearest path to the monastery, but narrow and difficult. The night is cold: I hope they will not keep us long waiting.

1st Ser. I heard the sound of travellers coming up the eastern avenue, and they may linger belike; for Monks are marvellously fond of great people and of strangers; at least the good Fathers of our monastery are.

2d Ser. Aye, in their late Prior's time they lived like lords themselves; and they are not very humble at present.—But there's light from the postern: here they come.

Enter Benedict, Leonora disguised like a Monk, and Agnes with a Peasant's cloak thrown over her.

Leo. (*speaking as she enters.*) It is well thought of, good Benedict. Go thou before me to gain brother Baldwin, in the first place; and I'll wait without on the spot we have agreed upon, until I hear the signal.

Ben. Thou comprehendest me completely, Brother; so God speed us both!

(*To* 1*st* Ser.)

Torch-man, go thou with me. This is the right path, I trust?

1st Ser. Fear not, Father; I know it well.

[Exit Ben. *and* 1*st* Ser.

Leo. (*to* Agnes, *while she waves her hand to* 2*d* Servant *to retire to a greater distance.*) After I am admitted to the monastery, fail not to wait for me at the mouth of the secret passage.

Ag. Fear not: Benedict has described it so minutely, I cannot fail to discover it.

Leo. What steps are those behind us? Somebody following us from the castle?

Enter 3d Servant in haste.

3d Ser. There are travellers arrived at the gate, and desire to be admitted for the night.

Leo. In an evil hour they come. Return, dear Agnes, and receive them. Benighted strangers, no doubt. Excuse my absence any how: go quickly.

Ag. And leave you to proceed alone?

Leo. Care not for me: there is an energy within me now, that bids defiance to fear. (*Beckons to* 2*d* Servant, *who goes out before her with the torch, and* [Exit.

Ag. (*muttering to herself, as she turns to the castle.*) The evil spirit hath brought travellers to us at this moment: but I'll send them to their chambers right quickly, and join her at the secret passage, notwithstanding.

[Exeunt.

ACT III.

Scene I.—The prison-chamber of the monastery.

Osterloo is discovered, sitting in a bending posture, with his clenched hands pressed upon his knees, and his eyes fixed on the ground, Jerome standing by him.

Jer. Nay, sink not thus, my Son; the mer-

cy of Heaven is infinite. Let other thoughts enter thy soul: let penitence and devotion subdue it.

Ost. Nothing but one short moment of division between this state of humanity and that which is to follow! The executioner lets fall his axe, and the dark veil is rent; the gulf is uncovered; the regions of anguish are before me.

Jer. My Son, my Son! this must not be; thine imagination overpowers thy devotion.

Ost. The dead are there; and what welcome shall the murderer receive from that assembled host? Oh, the terrible form that stalks forth to meet me! the stretching out of that hand! the greeting of that horrible smile! And it is thou, who must lead me before the tremendous majesty of my offended Maker! Incomprehensible and dreadful! What thoughts can give an image of that which overpowers all thought!

(*Clasping his hands tightly over his head, and bending himself almost to the ground.*)

Jer. (*after a pause.*) Art thou entranced? art thou asleep? art thou still in those inward agonies of imagination? (*Touching him softly.*) Speak to me.

Ost. (*starting up.*) Are they come for me? They shall not yet: I'll strangle the first man that lays hold of me. (*Grasping* Jerome *by the throat.*)

Jer Let go your hold, my lord; I did but touch you gently to rouse you from your stupor.

(Osterloo *lets go his hold, and* Jerome *shrinks to a distance.*)

Ost. I have grasped thee, then, too roughly. But shrink not from me thus. Strong men have fallen by my arm, but a child might contend with me now

(*Throwing himself back again into his chair, and bursting into tears.*)

Jer. Forgive me, my Son, there was a wildness in your eyes that made me afraid.

Ost. Thou need'st not be afraid: thou art a good man, and hast days of life still before thee; thou need'st not be afraid.——— But, as thou art a good man, speak to me, I conjure thee, as a man, not as a Monk: answer me as the true sense and reason of a man doth convince thee.

Jer. I will, my Son.

Ost. Dost thou in truth believe, that the very instant after life has left the body, we are forthwith awake and conscious in the world of spirits? No intermediate state of slumbering insensibility between?

Jer. It is indeed my belief. Death is but a short though awful pass; as it were, a winking of the eyes for a moment. We shut them in this world, and open them in the next: and there we open them with such increased vividness of existence, that this life, in comparison, will appear but as a state of slumber and of dreams.———But wherefore dost thou cross thine arms so closely on thy breast, and coil thyself together so wretchedly? What is the matter, my Son? Art thou in bodily anguish?

Ost. The chilly night shoots icy coldness through me.

Jer. O regard not the poor feelings of a fleshly frame, which thou so soon must part withal: a little time will now put an end to every thing that nature can endure.

Ost. (*raising his head quickly.*) Ha! how soon? Has the bell struck again since I listened to it last?

Jer. No; but it will soon strike, and daybreak is at hand. Rouse ye then, and occupy the few minutes that remain in acts of devotion becoming thine unhappy state. O, my Son, pour out thy soul in penitent prayers to an offended but merciful God. We, too, will pray for thee. Months, nay years after thy death, masses shall be said for the repose of thy soul, that it may at last be received into bliss. O my unhappy Son! pour forth thy spirit to God; and let thy prayers also ascend to our blessed Saint and Martyr, who will intercede for thee.

Ost. I cannot: I have not thoughts for prayer.—The gulf yawns before me—the unknown, the unbounded, the unfathomable!—Prayers! prayers! what prayers hath despair?

Jer. Hold, hold, retractory Spirit! This obstinacy is destruction.———I must call in brother Bernard to assist me: I cannot be answerable alone, in a service of such infinite moment.

Exit; *and after a pause, in which Osterloo seems absorbed in the stupor of despair, enter Leonora disguised.*

Leo. (*coming eagerly forward, and then stopping short to look at him.*)
There is some mistake in this: it is not Osterloo.———It is, it is! but Oh, how changed! Thy hand, great God! has been upon him. (*Going closer to him.*) Osterloo! Osterloo!

Ost. I hear thee, Father.

Leo. (*throwing aside her disguise.*)
O no! it is no Father. Lift up thine eyes and see an old Friend before thee, with deliverance in her hand. (*Holding out a key.*)

Ost. (*looking up wildly.*) Is it a sound in my ears, or did any one say deliverance? (*Gazing on her.*)
What thing art thou? A form of magic or delusion?

Leo. Neither, Count Osterloo; but an old friend, bringing this key in her hand for thy deliverance. Yet much I fear thou hast not strength enough to rise and follow me.

Ost. (*bounding from his seat.*) I have strength for any thing if there be deliverance in it.—Where go we? They will be upon us immediately.

Leo. (*lifting a small lamp from a table, and holding it to examine the opposite wall.*)
The door, as he described it, is to the right of a small projection of the wall.—Here—here it

is! (*Opens a small door, and beckons* Osterloo *to follow her.*)

Ost. Yes, blessed being! I will follow thee. —Ha! they are coming!

(*Strides hastily to the door, while* Leonora *holds up the lamp to light him into it, and then going in herself, shuts the door softly behind her.*)

SCENE II.—AN OLD RUINOUS VAULT, WITH A STRONG GRATED DOOR ON ONE SIDE, THROUGH WHICH THE MOON-BEAMS ARE GLEAMING: ON THE OTHER SIDE, AN OLD WINDING STAIRCASE, LEADING FROM THE UPPER REGIONS OF THE MONASTERY, FROM WHICH A FEEBLE LIGHT IS SEEN, INCREASING BY DEGREES, AND PRESENTLY LEONORA APPEARS, DESCENDING THE STAIRS WITH A LAMP IN HER HAND, FOLLOWED BY OSTERLOO.

As LEONORA enters, something on the wall catches her robe, and she turns round to disentangle it, bending her face close to the light.

Ost. (*stopping to assist her, and then gazing on her.*)
Thou art something I have known and loved somewhere, though it has passed away from my mind with all my better thoughts.——
——Great power of Heaven! art thou Leonora?

Leo. (*smiling.*) Dost thou know me now?

Ost. I do, I do! My heart knew thee before, but my memory did not.
(*Kneeling and kissing both her hands.*)
And so it is to thee—thou whom I first loved—Pardon me, pardon me!—thou whom I loved, and dared not love;—thou from whom I fled to be virtuous—thou art my deliverer. Oh had I never loved another after thee, it had been well——————Knowest thou it is a murderer thou art saving?

Leo. Say no more of this: I know thy story, and I came——

Ost. O! thou camest like a blessed spirit to deliver me from many horrors. I was terribly beset: thou hast snatched me from a tremendous brink.

Leo. I hope so, if this key prove to be the right one.

Ost. (*alarmed.*) Dost thou doubt it?

Leo. It seems to me smaller than it ought to be, when I consider that massive door.

Ost. Give it me.

(*Snatches the key from her, and runs to the door; then turns the key in the lock, and finding it too small, stamps with his feet, throws it from him, and holds up his clenched hands in despair.*)

Leo. Oh, cross fate! But I'll return again for the right one. Baldwin cannot be so wicked as to deceive me, and Benedict is still on the watch, near the door of the prison-chamber. Stay here till I return.

(*She ascends the stairs, whilst* Osterloo *leans his back to the wall, frequently moving his body up and down with impatient agitation: a bell tolls;* Osterloo *starts from his place, and* Leonora *descends again, re-entering in great alarm.*)

Leo. Oh! I cannot go now: that bell tolls to warn them to the great hall: I shall meet them on their way. What is to be done? The strength of three men could not force that heavy door, and thou art feeble and spent.

Ost. (*running furiously to the door.*) Despair has strength for any thing.

(*Seizes hold of the door, and, making two or three terrible efforts, bursts it open with a loud jar.*)

Leo. Supernatural strength has assisted thee: now, thou art free.

(*As* Osterloo *and* Leonora *are about to pass on through the door,* Wovelreid *and three armed* Soldiers *appear in the porch beyond it, and oppose their passage.*)

Wov. Hold! we are the Prior's Soldiers, and will suffer no prisoner to escape.

Ost. Those who dare prevent me!

(*Wrests a sword from one of the* Soldiers, *and, fighting furiously, forces his way past them all, they not daring to pursue him; when* Wovelreid *seizing on* Leonora *to prevent her from following him, she calls out.*)

Leo. O let me pass! and I'll reward you nobly.

Ost. (*returning to rescue* Leonora.)
Let go thine unhallowed grasp.

Leo. For Heaven's sake care not for me! Save thyself—save thyself! I am in no danger. Turn not again to fight, when such terrible odds are against thee.

Ost. I have arms in my hand now, and my foes are before me! (*Fights fiercely again, till* Morand, *with a strong band of* Soldiers, *entering the porch behind him, he is overpowered and secured;* Leonora *sinks down by the wall in a swoon.*)

Wov. Give me a rope. We must bind him securely; for the Devil has put the strength of ten men into him, though, but half an hour ago, his face was as pale as a moonlight icicle, and he could scarcely walk without being supported.

Mor. Alas, alas! his face has returned to its former colour; his head sinks on his breast, and his limbs are again feeble and listless. I would rather see him fighting like a fiend than see him thus.

Wov. Let us move him hence; would'st thou stop to lament over him?

Mor. It was base work in Baldwin to betray their plot to the Prior, for he took their money first, I'll be sworn.

Wov. He had betrayed the Prior then, and all the community besides.

Mor Well, let us move him hence: this is no business of ours.

[EXEUNT Morand, Wovelreid *and* Soldiers, *leading out* Osterloo.

(Enter AGNES by the grated door, and discovers LEONORA on the ground.)

Ag. O holy virgin! On the ground, fainting and ill! Have the barbarians left her thus? (*Chafing her temples and hand.*) She begins to revive. It is me, my dearest lady: look up and see me: those men are all gone.

Leo. And Osterloo with them?

Ag. Alas, he is.

Leo. It is fated so. Let me lie where I am: I cannot move yet, my good Agnes.

Ag. Nay, do not yet despair of saving the Count.

Leo. (*starting up and catching hold of her eagerly.*) How so? Is it possible?

Ag. The travellers, arrived at the castle, are the Imperial Ambassador and his train. Night overtook them on the mountains, and they are now making merry in the hall.

Leo. Thank Heaven for this! Providence has sent him hither. I'll go to him instantly, and conjure him to interpose his authority to save the life of Osterloo. Representing his liege lord, the Emperor, the Prior dare not disobey his commands, and the gates of the monastery will be opened at his call. Who comes here? Let us go.

Re-enter MORAND.

Mor. (*to* Leonora.) You are revived again: I am glad to see it. Pardon me, lady, that I forgot you in your extremity, and let me conduct you safely to the castle.

Leo. I thank you; but my servants are without. Let me go. Don't follow me, I pray you.

Mor. Let me support you through the porch, and I'll leave you to their care, since you desire it. [EXEUNT, Leonora *supported by* Morand *and* Agnes.

SCENE III.—A GRAND HALL, PREPARED FOR THE EXECUTION.

SOLDIERS are discovered drawn up on each side of the Scaffold, with BENEDICT and several of the MONKS on the front of the Stage. A bell tolls at measured intervals, with a deep pause between; after which enter MORAND, hanging his head sorrowfully.)

Ben. (*to* Mor.) Is he come forth?

1*st Monk.* Hast thou seen him?

Mor. They are leading him hither, but they move slowly.

1*st Monk.* Thou hast seen him then; how does he look now?

Mor. I cannot tell thee. These few hours have done on him the work of many years: he seems broken and haggarded with age, and his quenched eyes are fixed in their sockets, like one who walks in sleep.

Ben. Alas, alas! how changed in little time the bold and gallant Osterloo!

1*st Monk.* Have I not told thee, Morand, that fear will sometimes couch under the brazen helmet as well as the woollen cowl?

Mor. Fear, dost thou call it! Set him this moment in the field of battle, with death threatening him from a hundred points at once, and he would brave it most valiantly.

Ben. (*preventing* 1*st Monk from answering.*) Hush, Brother! Be not so warm, good Lieutenant; we believe what thou sayest most perfectly. The bravest mind is capable of fear, though it fears no mortal man. A brave man fears not man; and an innocent and brave man united, fears nothing.

Mor. Aye, now you speak reason: call it fear then if you will.—But the Prior comes; let us go to our places.

(They arrange themselves; and then enter the PRIOR, with a train of MONKS, who likewise arrange themselves: a pause, in which the bell tolls as before, and enter OSTERLOO, supported by JEROME and PAUL, WOVELREID, and SOLDIERS following.)

Prior. (*meeting him with solemnity.*) Count Osterloo; in obedience to the will of Heaven, for our own preservation, and the just punishment of guilt, I am compelled with the Monks of this monastery over whom I preside, to see duly executed within the time prescribed, this dismal act of retribution.—You have I trust, with the help of these holy men, as well as a few short moments would allow, closed your mortal account with Heaven: if there be aught that rests upon your mind, regarding worldly concerns which you leave behind you unsettled, let me know your last will, and it shall be obeyed. (*To* Jerome, *after pausing for an answer.*) Dost thou think he understands me?

Jer. (*to* Osterloo.) Did you hear, my Son, what the Prior has been saying to you?

Ost. I heard words through a multitude of sounds.

Jer. It was the Prior, desiring to know if you have any wishes to fulfil, regarding worldly affairs left behind you unsettled.—Perhaps to your soldiers you may.

Ost. (*interrupting him eagerly, and looking wildly round.*) My soldiers! are they here?

Jer. Ah, no! they are not here; they are housed for the night in their distant quarters: they will not be here till the setting of to-morrow's sun.

Ost. (*groaning deeply.*) To-morrow's sun!

Jer. Is there any wish you would have conveyed to them? Are there any of your officers to whom you would send a message or token of remembrance?

Ost. Ye speak again imperfectly, through many ringing sounds.

(*Jer. repeats the question in a slow, distinct voice.*)

Ost. Aye there is: these, these——

(*Endeavoring to tear off his cincture and some military ornaments from his dress.*) I cannot hit upon these fastenings.

Jer. We'll assist you, my Son. (*Undoing his cincture or girdle, &c.*)

Ost. (*still endeavouring to do it himself.*) My sword too, and my daggers.——My last remembrance to them both.

Jer. To whom, my lord?

Ost. Both—all of them.

Ben. (*who has kept sorrowfully at some distance, now approaching eagerly.*) Urge him no more: his officers will themselves know what names he would have uttered. (*Turning to* Ost. *with an altered voice.*) Yes, noble Count; they shall be given as you desire with your farewell affection to all your brave followers.

Ost. I thank ye.

Jer. And this is all?

Ost. Nay, nay!

Ben. What is there besides?

Prior. (*angrily.*) There is too much of this: and some sudden rescue may prevent us.

Ben. Nay, reverend Father, there is no fear of this; you would not cut short the last words of a dying man?

Prior. And must I be guided by thy admonitions? Beware; though Baldwin has not named thee, I know it is thou who art the traitor.

Ben. There is but one object at present to be thought of, and with your leave reverend Father, I will not be deterred from it. (*To* Ost. *again in a voice of tenderness.*) What is there besides, noble Osterloo, that you would wish us to do?

Ost. There is something.

Ben. What is it, my Lord?

Ost. I wot not.

Ben. Then let it rest.

Ost. Nay, nay! This—this——(*pulling a ring from his finger which falls on the ground.*) My hands will hold nothing.

Ben. I have found it; and what shall I do with it?

Ost. (*in a faint hurried voice.*) Leonora—Leonora.

Ben. I understand you, my lord.

Prior. I am under the necessity, Count Osterloo, of saying, your time is run to its utmost limit: let us call upon you now for your last exertion of nature. These good Brothers must conduct you to the scaffold. (Jer. *and* Paul *support him towards the scaffold, while* Benedict *retires to a distance, and turns his back to it.*)

Jer. Rest upon me, my Son, you have but a few paces to go.

Ost. The ground sinks under me; my feet tread upon nothing.

Jer. We are now at the foot of the scaffold, and there are two steps to mount: lean upon us more firmly.

Ost. (*stumbling.*) It is dark I cannot see.

Jer. Alas, my Son! there is a blaze of torches round you. (*After they are on the scaffold.*) Now, in token of thy faith in Heaven, and forgiveness of all men, raise up thy clasped hands. (*Seeing* Ost. *make a feeble effort, he raises them for him in a posture of devotion.*) And now to Heaven's mercy we commit thee.

(Jerome *and* Paul *retire, and two* Executioners *prepare him for the block, and assist him to kneel. He then lays down his head, and they hold his hands while a third* Executioner *stands with the raised axe.*)

1st Ex. (*speaking close into his ear.*) Press my hand when you are ready for the stroke.

(*A long pause.*)

He gives no sign.

2d Ex. Stop, he will immediately.

(*A second pause.*)

Does he not?

1st Ex. No.

Prior. Then give the stroke without it.

(*3d Ex. prepares to give the stroke, when the* Imperial Ambassador *rushes into the hall, followed by* Leonora *and* Agnes, *and a numerous train.*)

Am. Stop the execution! In the name of your liege lord the Emperor, I command you to stop upon your peril. My lord Prior, this is a treacherous and clandestine use of your seignorial power. This noble servant of our Imperial Master (*pointing to* Osterloo) I take under my protection; and you must first deprive an Imperial Ambassador of life, ere one hair of his head fall to the ground.

Ben. (*running to the scaffold.*) Up noble Osterloo! Raise up thy head: thou art rescued: thou art free.

Leo. Rise, noble Osterloo! dost thou not know the voice that calls thee?

Ben. He moves not: he is in a swoon.

(*Raises* Osterloo *from the block, whilst* Leonora *bends over him with anxious tenderness.*

Leo. He is ghastly pale: yet it surely can be but a swoon. Chafe his hands, good Benedict, while I bathe his temples. (*After trying to restore him.*) Oh, no, no! no change takes place. What thinkest thou of it? Is there any life here?

Ben. In truth I know not: this seems to me the fixed ghastly visage of complete death.

Leo. Oh, no, no! he will be restored. No stroke has fallen upon him: it cannot be death. Ha! is not that something? Did not his lips move?

Ben. No, lady; you but deceive yourself; they moved not: they are closed forever.

Leo. (*wringing her hands.*) Oh it is so! it is so!—after all thy struggles and exertions of despair, this is thy miserable end!—Alas, alas! thou who didst bear thy crest so proudly in many a well-fought field; this is thy miserable end! (*Turning away, and hiding her face in the bosom of* Agnes.)

Am. (*examining the body more closely.*) I think in very truth he is dead.

1st Gentleman of his Train. Yes; the face never looks thus, till every spark of life is extinguished.

Am. (*turning fiercely to the* Prior.) How is this, Prior? What sorcery has been here, that your block alone should destroy its victim, when the stroke of the axe has been wanting? What account shall I carry to my master of the death of his gallant General?

Prior. No sorcery hath been practised on the deceased: his own mind has dealt with him alone, and produced the effects you behold. And, when you return to Lewis of Bavaria your Master; tell him that his noble General, free from personal injury of any kind, died, within the walls of this monastery, of fear.

Am. Nay, nay, my good Prior; put the fool's cap on thine own head, and tell him this tale thyself.——————Fear! Osterloo and fear coupled together! when the lion and the fawn are found couching in the same lair, we will believe this.

Prior. All the Brothers of the Order will attest it.

Am. Away with the testimony of your cowled witnesses! (*Beckoning* Morand *to come near.*) Morand, thou art a brave fellow; I have known thee of old. Thou art the Prior's officer indeed; but thou art now under my protection, and shalt be received into the Emperor's service with increased rank: Speak the truth then, boldly; how died Count Osterloo?

Mor. In very truth then, my Lord, according to my simple thoughts, he died even as the Prior has told you.

Am. Out upon thy hireling's tongue! art thou not ashamed, thyself wearing a Soldier's garb, to blast a Soldier's fame? There is no earthly thing the brave Osterloo was ever known to fear.

Mor. You say true, my lord; and on my sword's point I'll maintain it against any man as stoutly as yourself. But here is a pious Monk (*pointing to* Jerome) who will explain to you what I should speak of but lamely.

Jer. With the Prior's permission, my lord, if you will retire with me a little while, I'll inform you of this mysterious event, even simply as it happened. And perhaps you will then confess, that, called upon suddenly, under circumstances impressing powerfully the imagination, to put off this mortal frame, and stand forth in that tremendous presence, before which this globe, with all its mighty empires, hangs but as a crisped rain-drop, shivering on the threaded gossamer; the bravest mind may, if a guilty one, feel that within which is too powerful for human nature to sustain.

Am. Explain it as thou wilt; I shall listen to thee: but think not to cheat our Imperial Master of his revenge for the loss of his gallant General. I shall not fail, my Lord Prior, to report to him the meek spirit of your christian authority, which has made the general weal of the community subservient to your private revenge, and another month, I trust, shall not pass over our heads, till a worthier man (*pointing to* Benedict) shall possess this power which you have so greatly abused.——————————Let the body be removed, and laid in solemn state, till it be delivered into the hands of those brave troops, who shall inter it with the honours of a Soldier.

THE SIEGE: A COMEDY.

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

MEN:

COUNT VALDEMERE.
BARON BAURCHEL.
WALTER BAURCHEL, *his Brother.*
ANTONIO, *Baron de Bertrand.*
DARTZ, *his Friend.*
PAGE, *to* COUNT VALDEMERE.
LORIMORE, *his Valet.*
HOVELBERG, *a Jewel or Diamond Merchant.*
Soldiers, Servants, &c.

WOMEN:

COUNTESS VALDEMERE, *Mother to the Count.*
LIVIA.
JEANETTA, *Woman to the Countess.*
NINA.
Ladies, &c.

SCENE.—A Castle *on the French confines of* Germany.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—A GROVE NEAR THE CASTLE, WITH PART OF THE EMBATTLED WALLS SEEN THROUGH THE TREES.

Enter BARON BAURCHEL and WALTER BAURCHEL, speaking as they enter.

Bar. Have done, Brother; I can ear it no longer. Hadst thou been bred in a cave of Kamschatka, instead of a mansion of civilized Europe, this savage plainness had been endurable: but——

Walt. I call a turnip a turnip, indeed, when other people say it is a peach or a nectarine; I call a pig a pig too, though they swear it is a fawn or an antelope; and they look at me, I confess, somewhat suspiciously, as if they expected to see a tail peeping from under my jerkin, or fur upon my hands like a bear.—You would have me civilized, would you? It is too late in the day now, good sooth!

Bar. Yes, the time is indeed gone by. This bachelor's life has brutified thee past all redemption. Why did you not marry, Brother?

Walt. Nay, you who have met with so many goddesses and creatures of perfection in the world, why did not you marry, Brother? I who could light upon nothing better than women—mere women; every one of them too with some fault or failing belonging to her, as obvious as those white hairs that now look from under your peruke, was it any marvel that I did not marry?

Bar. Had your wife possessed as many faults as you do wrinkles on your forehead, you would have been the better for her; she would have saved thee, as I said before, from brutification.

Walt. And your's would have saved you from dupification, dotification, and as many fications besides, as an old sentimental, hypocritical, greedy Dulcinea can fasten on a rhyme-writing beau, who is stepping most unwillingly, with his lace-cloaked hose, over that ungracious line of division, that marks out his grand climacteric.

Bar. Hypocritical! greedy! you don't know the delicacy of her mind: nothing can be more tender, more refined, more disinterested than her attachment to me. You don't understand her.

Walt. Perhaps, I don't understand the attachments of the fair sex now-a-days. An old rich neighbour of mine informed me the other night, that he is going to marry his poor friend Spendall's youngest daughter, who has actually fallen in love with him; and nothing, as he tells me, almost in your own words, can be more tender, more disinterested than her attachment. Not understanding these matters, Brother, I'll freely confess to you I did not give much credit to his story; but I may be wrong, nevertheless. I dare say you believe it entirely.

Bar. Ridiculous! What proofs can the fool possibly receive of her attachment?

Walt. The very same which the Countess so condescendingly vouchsafes to yourself; she accepts of his presents.

Bar. The very same! No, no, Walter Baurchel; very different! Does not every smile of her countenance, every look of her eyes, involuntarily express her partiality for me?

Walt. Say, rather, every word of her tongue.

Bar. With what generous enthusiasm did she not praise my sonnet to Sensibility.

Walt. Aye, she is generous in what costs her little; for what are two or three lies, more or less, in the week's confession between her and Father Benedict? She'll scarcely eat a mouthful of partridge the less for it.

Bar. O heartless infidel! Thou wouldst mistrust the fond smiles of a mother caressing her rosy-faced infant.

Walt. By my faith, so I would, Baron, if that same infant brought a diamond necklace, or a gold snuff-box in his hand, for every kiss she bestowed upon him. Every sonnet you write, costs you, one with another, a hundred louis d'ors. If all the money vanity filches from rich poets, could be transferred to the pockets of poor ones, verse-making would be-

as good a business as shoe-making, or any other handicraft in the country.

Bar. Hold thy unhallowed tongue! These subjects are not for thy rude handling. What is all this grumbling intended for? Tell me what you want, and have done with it; you who pique yourself so much on your plain speaking.

Walt. Well, then; I want you to let the next six sonnets you write go unpraised, and give the money that should have paid for the praising of them, six hundred louis d'ors, as I reckon, to Antonia. Is it not a shame that your own ward and heir, in love with the lady of this castle, as you very well know, cannot urge his suit with advantage, for want of the equipage and appendages becoming his rank; while this conceited Count, by means of his disinterested mother, drains your purse so freely; and is thereby enabled to ruin the pretensions of him whom you ought to support?

Bar. His pretensions are absurd, and cannot be supported.

Walt. Why absurd? Is he not as brave, as well born, as handsome, too, as his rival?

Bar. What signify all his good qualities? In the presence of his mistress he is an idiot.

Walt. It is true, he loses all possession of himself in that situation, and therefore she despises him, while the gay confidence of the other delights her: but he should be supported and encouraged.

Bar. How encouraged? Silly fellow!

Walt. He feels too sensibly his disadvantages, and they depress him. He feels that he is not entitled to pretend to Livia, but as the probable heir of your estates; while your fantastical fondness for this woman and her son, makes it a doubtful matter whether you may not be tempted———But hush! here she comes with her new-ruddled face, bearing her morning's potation of flattery with her, for a stomach of most wonderful digestion.

Enter COUNTESS, VALDEMERE, who, after slightly noticing WALTER, runs up caressingly to the BARON:

Countess. How do you do, my dear Baron? I hope you have passed the night in sweet repose.—Yet, why do I hope it? You scarcely deserve that I should.

Bar. And why so, Belinda?

Walt. (*aside, making a lip at them.*) Belinda, too! Sweet innocents!

Bar. Why should you not hope that I have passed the night in repose?

Countess. Because I am vindictive, and would be revenged upon you for making me pass a very sleepless one.

Walt. (*aside.*) Will she make love to him before one's very face.

Bar. Then I am a culprit indeed, but an innocent one. What kept you awake?

Countess. O, those verses of yours! those dear provoking verses! they haunted me the whole night. (Baron *bows.*) But don't think I am going to talk to you of their beauties—those tender easy graces which they possess, in common with every thing that comes from your pen: I am going to tell you of their defects. You know well my friendship for you, my dear Baron, makes me sometimes severe.

Bar. (*aside to* Walt.) There now, you Churl, do you call this flattery? (*Aloud.*) My dear Countess, your severity is kindness.

Countess. Receive it then, as such; for indeed I must be very severe on the two last lines of the second stanza, which have disturbed me exceedingly. In the verses of an ordinary poet, I should not find fault with them; but in a work, where every thing besides, is easy, harmonious and correct, the slightest defect is conspicuous; and I must positively insist on your altering them, though you should hate me for being so fastidious.

Bar. (*aside to* Walt.) There now, ungracious Canker-tongue, do you call this hypocrisy? (*Aloud.*) Madam, I kiss the rod in so fair and so friendly a hand. Nay, it is a sceptre, to which I bow with devotion.

Countess. (*to* Walt.) You see, good Sir, I take great liberties with the Baron, as, I doubt not, with the privilege of a brother, you yourself sometimes do.

Walt. Yes, Madam, but my way of finding fault with him is somewhat different from yours.

Countess. Yet, you still find his generous spirit, I am sure, submissive to the rod.

Walt. I can't say I do, Madam.

Countess. You are unfortunate enough, perhaps, to use it unskilfully.

Walt. I am fortunate at present, however, in receiving so good a lesson from you, Madam.

Countess. O no! there is no skill with me. There are persons to whom one cannot say one-half of what one really thinks, without being deemed a flatterer.

Walt. In this, however, I have been more fortunate than you, Madam; for I have said to him what I have really thought for these forty years past, and have entirely escaped that imputation.

Bar. Aye, flattery is a sin thou wilt never do penance for. Thou can'st rub the side of a galled jade with any tender-hearted innocent in Christendom, and be mighty surprised withal that the poor devil should be so unreasonable as to winch at it.

Countess. Nay, nay, Baron! say not this of so good a brother, the shrewdness and penetration of whose mind are tempered, I am sure, with many amiable qualities.

Walt. Nay, pray, Madam, spare me, and deal with but one of us at a time. Such words will intoxicate a poor younger brother like myself, who is scarcely able to get a fowl for his pot, or new facings for his doublet, and cannot therefore be supposed to be accustomed to them.

Countess. Sir, I understand not your insinuation.

Bar. Regard him not, Madam: how should a mind, noble and delicate as your own, comprehend the unworthy thoughts of contemptible meanness?—Let me conduct you to company more deserving of you. Our fair hostess, I suppose, is already in her grotto.

Countess. No, she and my son are to follow me. But you must not go to the grotto with me now: nobody is to see it till the evening.

Bar. (offering to lead her out.) A step or two only.

Countess. O, not a step for the world!

[Exit, Baron *kissing her hand as she goes off.*

Bar. (turning fiercely upon Walt.*)* Thy unmannerly meanness is intolerable. Still hinting at the presents she receives. Greedy as thou call'st her, she never asked a gift from me in her life, excepting my picture in miniature, which could only be valuable to her as she prized the original.

Walt. Say rather, as her jeweller shall prize the goodly brilliants that surround it.

Bar. What do you mean?

Walt. What I should have told you before, if she had not interrupted us; that her trinket-broker is this very morning coming secretly, by appointment, to the castle, to treat with her for certain things of great value which she wishes to dispose of; and if your picture be not amongst them, I'll forfeit my head upon it.

Bar. It is false.

Walt. Here comes one who will confirm what I say.

Enter Dartz.

Walt. I'm glad to see you, Chevalier, for you can bear evidence to a story of mine that will not be believed else.

Dart. This is a better reason for being so than most of my friends have to give.

Walt. Is not Hovelberg, the jeweller, coming secretly to the castle to-day to confer with the Countess?

Dart. Yes, he told me so himself; and added, with a significant smile, that she had some of her old ware to dispose of.

Walt. Do you hear that, brother? It was as much as to say, she had often had such truckings with him before. Aye; you are not the only man who has thought his own dear resemblance lapped warmly behind the stomacher of his mistress, while, stripped of its jewels, it has been tossed into the drawer of some picture-monger, to be changed into a General of the last century, or one of the Grand-Dukes of Austria. As for you, brother, they'll put a black velvet cap on your head, and make you a good sombre doctor of theology.

Bar. You shall not, however, make me the credulous man you think of, Walter Baurchel, with all your contrivances.

Walt. And you don't believe us then?

Bar. Are you fool enough to imagine I do?

Walt. That were foolish enough, I grant you; for though an old lover has generally a strong vein of credulity about him, the current of his belief always sets one way; carrying withered nosegays, tattered billet-doux, broken posies, and all kinds of trumpery along with it at fifteen knots by the hour.

Bar. Walter Baurchel! Walter Baurchel! flesh and blood cannot endure the offensive virulence of thy tongue.

Dart. He is indeed too severe with you, Baron; but what he tells you of Hovelberg is, nevertheless, very true.

Bar. I'll believe neither of you: you are both hatching a story to deceive me.

[Exit *in anger.*

Walt. (shrugging his shoulders and casting up his eyes.) What strong delusion we poor mortals may be blinded withal! That poor brother of mine believes, that the woman who refused to marry him when he was young and poor, yet smiles upon him, praises him, accepts presents from him when he is old and rich, must certainly entertain for him a most delicate, disinterested attachment; and you might as well overturn the walls of that castle with one stroke of your foot as beat this absurdity out of him.

Dart. But you are too violent: it will not be beat out; it must be got out as it got in, with craft and discretion.

Walt. Then devil take me for attempting it! for craft I have none, and discretion is a thing———

Dart. You will never have any thing to do with, I believe.

Walt. What then is to be done? If it were not that I cannot brook to see the conceited overbearing son of this Jezebel, carrying off the mistress of Antonia, I would even let the old fool sit under the tickling of her thievish fingers, and make as great a noodle of himself as he pleases.—But it must not be.—Fie upon it, Dartz! thou hast a good head for invention, while I, Heaven help me! have only a good tongue for railing; do thou contrive some plot or other to prevent the disgrace of thy friend.

Dart. Plots are not easily contrived.

Walt. I know this, else I should have tried it myself.

Dart. Are you well acquainted with the Count?

Walt. I am but just come to the castle, where I have thrust myself in, though an unwelcome guest, to look after the interest of De Bertrand; and should be glad to know something more of the man who has so much intoxicated the gay Livia. What kind of a being is he?

Dart. It would puzzle me as much as the contriving of your plot to answer that question. There is nothing real in him. He is a mere package of pretences, poorly held together, with sense and capacity enough, were

it not for one defect in his nature, to make him all that he affects to be. He is a thing made up of seemings.

Walt. Made up of seemings!

Dart. Even so; for what in other men is reckoned the sincerest part of their character, his very self-conceit, is assumed.

Walt. And what is the defect you hinted at?

Dart. It has been whispered to me by an old school-fellow of his, that he is deplorably deficient in personal courage; which accounts for his mother's having placed him in the regiment of a superannuated General, and also, for the many complaints he makes of the inactivity of his commander. It is a whisper I am inclined to credit; and, if we must have a plot, it shall hinge upon this.

Walt. My dear fellow! nothing can be better. Give it a turn or two in thy brains, and I'll warrant thou drawest it out again, shaped into an admirable plot. Direct all thyself, and I'll work under thee as a journeyman conspirator; for, as I said before, I have a ready tongue, but a head of no invention.

Dart. We must speak of this another time. See who approaches.

Walt. Ha! the man we are speaking of, and the deluded Livia. By my faith he has a specious appearance! and the young fool looks at him too, as she would not look at a worthier man, whose merit might be tarnished with a few grains of modesty.

Enter VALDEMERE and LIVIA, followed by JEANETTE carrying a basket filled with flowers, &c.

Dart. (*to* Liv.) Permit me, Madam, to pay you my profound homage.

Liv. You are welcome here, Chevalier: what accident procures me this pleasure? (*Aside to* Count.) He'll make one more at our midnight revel in the grotto.

Vald. (*Aside with some chagrin.*) Are there not enow of us?

Dart. Being in this part of the country on military duty, I could not resist the pleasure of paying my respects at the castle: and I honestly confess I had a secondary motive for my visit, expecting to find amongst your guest, my old friend and school-fellow Antonia.

Liv. Baron de Bertrand, you mean. He was here yesterday, but I really forget whether he went away or remained in the evening. (*Affecting to yawn.*) Is he with us, or not, Count?

Walt. (*aside to* Dart.) Meet me by-and-by in my chamber. My tongue is unruly, and I had better go while I can keep it between my teeth. [EXIT.

Liv. Does not his amiable relation there, who steals from us so quietly, know where he is?

Vald. If you are in quest of your friend, Chevalier, had you not better inquire at some of the peasants', houses in the neighborhood? There may be some beauty in the village perhaps, whose august presence a timid man may venture to approach, particularly if her charms should be somewhat concealed behind the friendly flax of her distaff.

Dart. Pardon me, Count; I thought my friend had aspired to a beauty, whose charms would have pleased him, indeed, behind the flax of a distaff, but will not, I trust entirely intimidate him from the more brilliant situation in which fortune has placed them. Aye; that glance in your eye, and that colour in your cheek, charming Livia, tell me, I am right.

Liv. They speak at random then; for it would puzzle a much wiser head than I wear on my shoulders to say what are his pretensions. He visits me, it is true, but suddenly takes his leave again, and the very next day, perhaps, as suddenly returns.

Vald. Like poor puss with roasted chesnuts before her, who draws back her burnt paw every time she attempts them, but will not give up the attack. He may, however, after some more of those hasty visits, find courage for it at last.

Dart. There is one attack, however, for which he never lacks courage; when the enemies of his country are before him.

Vald. True; he is brave in the field, but he is fortunate also. He serves under an active Commander, while I waste my ardour in listless inactivity.

Dart. Cheer up then, noble Count, I have good news to tell you upon this score.

Vald. on this score! Is any change to take place? (*In a feeble voice.*)

Dart. (*after a pause.*) You are too well bred to be impatient for an answer.

Vald. O no! You mistake me; I am very impatient; I am on fire to hear it.

Dart. Expand then your doughty breast at thoughts of the glorious fields that are before you: your old General is set aside, and the most enterprising man in the service, Count ——— himself is now your Commander. (*After a momentary pause, and eyeing him keenly.*) Silent joy, they say, is most sincere; you are, I perceive, considerately and profoundly glad.

Vald. (*assuming suddenly great animation.*) O immeasurably so. Great news indeed!—Strange—I mean very admirable news, if one could be sure it were true.

Dart. True! Who doubts what delights him?

Vald. I thought the regiment was promised to another person; I was not prepared to hear it.

Dart. So it appeared.

Vald. But I am delighted—I can't express it:—I'm glad to a folly. Tol de rol—tol de rol. (*Singing and skipping about affectedly.*)

Liv. Cruel creature! to sing at what, perhaps, will make others weep.

Vald. Weep!—No, I don't weep. I am hap-

py to a folly, but I don't weep. (*Skipping about again.*) Tol lol de rol!—plague take these stones! this ground is abominably rough.

Dart. Fie upon it! any ground is smooth enough for a happy man to skip upon.

Liv. You smile, Dartz; your news is of your own invention.

Dart. Not absolutely, Madam; there was such a rumour.

Vald. (*eagerly.*) A rumour! only a rumour! Why did you say it was true?

Dart. To give you a moment's pleasure, Valdemere. If you have enjoyed it you are a gainer; and the disappointment, I hope, will not break your heart.

Vald. It is cruel indeed. But who can feel disappointment in this fair presence. (*Bowing to* Liv.) Let us go to the grotto, charming Livia; we waste our time here with folly.—Give me thy basket, child, (*to* Jean.) I'll dispose of every chaplet it contains to admiration. I'll hang them all up with mine own hand.

Liv. Don't be so very active: you positively shan't follow me to the grotto: I told you so before.

Vald. Positive is a word of no positive meaning when it enforces what we dislike. However, since you forbid it, I will not *follow* you; I'll go by your side, which is far better, and support your fair hand on my arm. (*Putting* Livia's *arm in his with conceited confidence.*)

Liv. What a sophistical explanation of my words! a heretical theologian is a joke to you.

Vald. (*Casting a triumphant look behind him to* Dart, *as he leads her off.*) Good morning, Chevalier, you go in quest of your friend, I suppose. Pray tell him to take courage, and be less diffident of his own good parts, and he may at last be promoted, perhaps, to the good graces of his Quarter-Master's daughter.

Dart. No body at least, who sees Count Valdimere in his present situation, will think of recommending modesty to him.

[Exeunt Vald. *and* Liv. *followed by* Jean.

Dart. Impudent puppy! his triumph shall be short. Blind woman! are flattery and impudence so necessary in gaining your favour, that all other qualities, without them, are annihilated? He shall this very night pay dearly for his presumption. [Exit.

ACT II.

Scene I.—A room in the castle.

Enter Walter Baurchel and Dartz, by opposite sides.

Walt. Ha, my good friend! punctual to a wish! you have got your head stored I hope with a good plot.

Dart. I am at least more in the humour for it than I was. I have found his conceit and arrogance more intolerable than I imagined. I have touched him in the weak part too, and find him vulnerable.

Walt. Well, but the plot.

Dart. I have discovered also a trait of villany in him, that would prick me on to the charge were I sluggish as a tortoise.

Walt. So much the better. Now for the plot.

Dart. As I passed just now through the little green copse near the postern, a beautiful girl crossed my way and in tears.

Walt. Tut! she has crossed thy wits too.

Dart. Have patience; she'll be useful.—I questioned her gently.

Walt. Aye; gently enough, I doubt not.

Dart. And find she is sister to that shrewd little fellow the Count's page; that her affections have been gained and betrayed by Valdemere; and she is now hovering about the castle, for an opportunity of upbraiding him, or in the vain hope, perhaps, of moving his pity.

Walt. She has moved thy pity at least; what has all this to do with our plot?

Dart. A great deal: I am telling you beforehand what we shall have to work upon: a plot cannot, any more than a coat, be made without materials.

Walt. Well, but shew me thy pattern first, and talk of the buttons and buckram afterwards.

Dart. Be it so then, since you are so impatient. There is a friend of mine stationed about a league hence with his regiment; where he is to wait till he is joined by another detachment of the army, as the enemy, it is feared, may penetrate to these parts, and overrun the country. I mean to go to him immediately; make him privy to our design, and engage him to send a party of his soldiers to make a sham attack upon the castle at midnight, when we shall all be assembled at this fanciful banquet in the grotto.

Walt. (*nodding his head.*) Good.

Dart. Valdemere then, as the gallant soldier he affects to be, and the favoured admirer too of the lady, must of course take upon himself the defence of her castle.

Walt. (*nodding again.*) Very good.

Dart. This will quell his presumption, I trust; and expose him to Livia for the very paltry being that he is.

Walt. Aye, so far good; you'll make some furtherance to the plot out of this.

Dart. Some furtherance to the plot! Why this is the plot itself.

Walt. The plot itself! Any simple man in the country might have devised as much as this comes to.

Dart. It does not please you then because it is not intricate. But don't despise it entirely; though the outline is simple, tricks and contrivances to work up the mind of our victim to the state that is suited to our purpose, will enrich it as we proceed; and the Page I

have mentioned, provoked by the wrongs of his sister, will be our subtle and diligent agent. Nay, should we draw Valdemere into great disgrace, we may bribe him, by concealing his dishonour, to marry the poor girl he has wronged.

Walt. Ha! this indeed is something like a plot.—And Antonia's marriage with Livia, how is that to be fastened to the end of it?

Dart. Nay, I have no certain hook, I confess, to hang that upon. It must depend on the Baron; for unless he declare Antonia his heir, he will never venture to propose himself as a match for the well-dowried Livia. But we shall manage matters ill, if we cannot draw the Baron into our scheme.

Walt. Then a fig for your plot! It is as bare of invention as the palm of my hand.

Dart. This is always the case with those who lack invention themselves: they are never pleased with that of any other person, if it be not bristled over with contrivances like a hedge-hog. And I must be allowed to say, Mr. Walter Baurchel, that he who racks his brains for your service, works for a thankless master.

Walt. He works for an honest one, then.

Dart. Away with the honesty that cannot afford a few civil words to a friend, who is doing his best to oblige you! As much duplicity as this amounts to, would not much contaminate your virtue.

Walt. Well, well, I am wrong, perhaps, but thou art as testy as myself.

Dart. Because I won't bear your untoward humour. Some people find every body testy who approaches them, and marvel at their own bad luck.—But no more of this: let us think of our friend. Does the Baron believe what you told him of Hovelberg's appointment with the Countess?

Walt. He makes a shew of not believing it, but I think he has his own suspicions at bottom; for his valet tells me, he has sent to desire Hovelberg to speak with him as soon as he arrives.

Dart. Here comes De Bertrand; I hear his steps.

Walt. Is he returned to the castle?

Dart. Yes; I forgot to tell you so, you were in such a hurry for your plot.

Walt. Silly fellow! he cannot stay away from his capricious mistress, though the first glance of her eye sinks him to a poltron at once.

Enter Antonia.

Ant. (*to* Walt.) Good morning, gentle Kinsman;—but methinks you are not very glad to see me; these are not looks of welcome.

Walt. Thou art one of those that trouble me.

Ant. I am of a pretty numerous class of beings then, from the kitten that gnaws at your shoestring, to the Baron, who spoils your best pen in writing love-verses to his mistress.

Walt. Well; and they would torment any man. Love-verses! with such an old painted hypocrite for the object of them!

Ant. His first love, you know; his Delia.

Walt. His Delia! His delusion. Is there such a thing as witchcraft in the world? I believe in good earnest there is. Her dominion over him is a mystery; a more than Egyptian blindness.

Ant. Nay, you have yourself in a good degree to blame for it, my good Sir. Had you encouraged his humour, harmless as it is; bestowing some praise on his verses, and less abuse on the too youthful cut of his peruke, she could never have taken possession of him as she has done.

Walt. Praise his verses, and not abuse his peruke! it had been beyond the self-denial of a saint.

Dart. And had you———

Walt. (*to* Dart.) One assailant at a time, if you please.

Dart. Excuse me, Sir; I must needs say, had you even paid a little attention to the Countess herself, when she first renewed her intimacy with the Baron, she would have been less anxious, perhaps, to estrange him from his old friends.

Walt. Attention to her! I could not have done it to gain myself, like Mahomet, the entrance to the seventh heaven. I must tell people plainly what I think of them, though I should hang for it.

Dart. Had you said starve for it, you had named the fate that more commonly attends plain speaking.

Ant. And in telling people disagreeable truths to gratify your own humour too, are you surprised, my good Sir, that they should not be edified thereby?

Walt. (*to* Ant.) What, young Soldier, you are become a plain speaker too.

Ant. Just to shew you, Sir, how agreeable it is.

Walt. Ha, ha, ha! Well; thou hast the better of me now. Would thou could'st prate as briskly to thy mistress! that would do more for thee in one hour than all thy bashful tenderness in a year.

Ant. I might———I should indeed———I defend not my weakness.—You promised on this point to spare me.

Walt. Aye, the very sound of her name quells thy spirit, and makes thee hesitate and stammer like a culprit. It is provoking.

Dart. You profess a violent detestation of conceit, my shrewd Sir; where, then, is your indulgence for modesty?

Walt. You mistake the matter, Dartz. Your friend there, has as good a conceit of himself as any man: he is not modest but bashful; a weakness too that only besets him in the presence of his mistress. By this good fist of mine! it provokes me almost to the cudgelling of such an unaccountable ninny. But I would cudgel thee, and serve thee too, De Bertrand. Take courage; we have a plot in our heads to make a man of thee at last.

Dart. (*aside, pulling* Walt. *by the sleeve.*) Say not a word of the plot: his sense of honour is so delicate, he would recoil at it.

Ant. A plot, did you say?

Walt. Aye, a kind of a plot;—that is to say ———What kind of a plot is it Dartz?

Dart. Have you forgot your own scheme for cheating the virtuoso, when your cabinet of antiquities comes to the hammer?

Walt. By my say! this memory of mine is not worth a pinch of tobacco. (*Seeing* Ant. *look at his watch.*) Art thou going any where?

Ant. No;—I did think———I believe I shall take a turn on the terrace.

Dart. (*to* Ant.) I understand you: take a turn in the cabinet of paintings rather; that will suit your purpose better.

Ant. May I presume to go there?

Walt. Presume, simpleton! That impudent puppy of a Count lords it in her dressing-room. Go thy ways! (*pushing him off the stage with slight anger:* Exit Antonia.) That fellow provokes me; yet there is something in him that goes so near my heart: he is more akin to me than his blood entitles him to be: he is like a part of myself.

Dart. Not the least like it. Now that you have taught us to speak plainly, I must needs say, were he at all like yourself, you would disinherit him in the course of a month.

Walt. You are right, perhaps.—But alas! he would not be much the poorer for being disinherited by me. O that old fool of a brother! I could flog him for his poetry!

Dart. Have patience, and we may find a better way of dealing with him. If we could persuade him to disguise himself like a diamond merchant, and accompany Hovelberg when he visits the Countess, he would be convinced of the true nature of her regard for him.

Walt. An excellent thought! This is just what was wanting to make our plot really like a plot.

Dart. I'm glad it pleases you at last. Before I leave the castle to negociate with my friend for his myrmidons, I'll find out the Baron, and endeavour to persuade him.

Walt. Heaven prosper thee! but return, ere thou goest, and let me know the result.

Dart. Depend upon it. [Exeunt *severally.*

Scene II.—A room hung with paintings, and enriched with carving and ornaments, &c.

Enter Valdemere and Antonia.

Vald. Here are some good paintings, De Bertrand; if you have any taste for the art, they will please you. This Guido on the left is a divine thing. The Magdalen in Count Orrinberg's collection was considered as superior to it; but I always maintained this to be the best painting of the two, and the world have at last adopted my opinion. I have always decidedly thought———But you are not looking at it. Is there any thing in that door to arrest your attention? The carving on it is but indifferent.

Ant. I thought I heard footsteps. She's coming.

Vald. Pooh! she won't be here this half hour; so you need not yet take alarm, as if an enemy were advancing upon you.

Ant. You connect the idea of alarm with an enemy; would I had firmness to face what I love! You are a happy man, Valdemere, and a bold one too, most assuredly: what would not I give for a little of your happy self-possession.

Vald. Aye; it is an article of some value: he who can't possess himself, must not expect to possess his mistress.

Ant. A very specious maxim this, from a young fellow's mouth with the manliness of well-curled wiskers to support it: yet I have seen the embarrassment of a diffident character plead its own cause more effectually than the eloquence of a brazen-borrowed Barrister. At least I have always felt it have more power over me.

Vald. That is natural enough: it is a common selfish sympathy: one thief pities another when the rope is round his neck. Feeling for others is the consequence of our own imperfections; this is a known truth.

Ant. Establish it if you can, Valdemere, for it will go well nigh to prove you immaculate.

Vald. How far soever I may be from that degree of perfection, jealousy at least is not one of my faults, since I have introduced a rival into the apartments of my mistress, where he had not the courage to venture alone, and am also pointing out to him what he has not discovered for himself, that her picture is now before his eyes. (*Pointing to a picture.*)

Ant. (*looking up to it eagerly.*) It is somewhat like.

Vald. She sat for it at my request: no one else could prevail on her. The painter knew my taste in these matters, and has taken wonderful pains with it.

Ant. (*sighing.*) You have indeed been honoured.

Vald. He has made the eyes to look upon you with such expression.

Ant. Think you so? To me he appears to have failed in this respect; or perhaps it is because any semblance of eyes which I can thus stedfastly look upon, are not to me the eyes of Livia.

Vald. I did not suspect you to be so fastidious.

Ant. Not so neither. But surely eyes of such vivid expression should never be painted as looking at the spectator; for what pencil in the world can produce the effect he demands? They should be directed to some other object; and then he sees them as he has been accustomed to see them.

Enter LIVIA *behind them.*

Vald. Perhaps you are right: you talk like a connoisseur on the subject.

Liv. I come in good time then; for connoisseur or not, to hear De Bertrand talk at all is a very lucky adventure. You have wronged us much, Baron, to keep us so long ignorant of your taste for the fine arts.

Ant. (*embarrassed.*) Madam, I am much honoured. I am very little——— (*mumbling words in a confused way that are not heard.*) I am very much obliged to you.

Liv. You are grateful for slight obligations. But you are looking at my picture, I see, which was painted two years ago at the request of a good old uncle of mine; pray give me your opinion of it.

Ant. It appears——it is very charming. I is——that is, I suppose, it is very finely painted.

Liv. It is reckon'd so: and it certainly does more than justice to the original. (Ant. *hesitates as if he would speak but remains silent.*) You are of my opinion, I perceive, or at least too well bred to contradict me. Confess it freely: you are of my opinion.

Ant. O entirely, Madam.

Liv. You flatter me exceedingly.

Ant. I meant it in simple sincerity.

Liv. O, sincere enough, I doubt not.

Vald. And surely you will not question its simplicity.

Liv. (*to* Vald., *turning from* Ant. *with pity and contempt.*) Don't let us be too hard upon him. Pray look at that picture of my great Aunt who was a celebrated beauty.

Vald. (*gazing with affected admiration at* Livia's *picture.*) I have no eyes for any other beauty than what I now gaze upon.

Liv. And do you indeed admire this picture so much?

Vald. The faintest resemblance of its fair original is fascinating. Yet methinks the painter has failed in the expression of the eyes. But any eyes indeed that I can look thus stedfastly upon, are not to me the eyes of Livia.

Liv. Ah! these are in truth the words of a too partial friend.

Vald. Words from the heart, divine Livia, will tell from whence they came. (*They both walk to the bottom of the stage, speaking in dumb-shew, while* Ant. *remains in the front.*)

Ant. (*aside.*) With my own words he woos her, and before my face too.—Matchless impudence!—And such a man as this pleases Livia!—He whispers in her ear, and she smiles.—My heart sickens at it.—I'll look no more, lest I become envious and revengeful, and hateful to myself.—O Nature! hast thou made me of such poor stuff as this?

Vald. (*turning round from the bottom of the stage.*) Ha, De Bertrand! are you declaiming? Some speech of a tragedy, I suppose, from the vehemence of your gesture. Pray let Livia hear you: she is partial, you know, to every thing you do, and finds every exhibition you make before her particularly amusing.

Ant. (*sternly.*) Come nearer to me, Sir; the first part of my speech is for your private ear.—Come nearer.

Liv. Pray go to him: by the tone of his voice he personates some tyrant, and must be obeyed.

Ant. Yes, Sir, I must be obeyed. (Vald. *shuffles up to him unwillingly, and* Ant. *speaks in his ear.*) Take no more impertinent liberties with me in this lady's presence, or be prepared to justify them elsewhere.

[EXIT, *looking at* Vald. *sternly, who remains silent.*

Liv. (*advancing to the front.*) What is the matter, Count?

Vald. Nothing—nothing at all.

Liv. Nay something unpleasant has passed between you.

Vald. I believe I did wrong: I should have treated him more gently. But the strangeness of his behaviour obliged me to use threatening words, upon which he withdrew, and chose not to understand them.

Liv. How ill one judges then by dumb-shew of what passes at a distance.

Vald. I am always calm on these occasions, while he assumes the fierceness of a boaster.

Liv. But you will not call him out for such a trifle.

Vald. Not for the world, divine creature, if it give you uneasiness.

Liv. How gentle you are! The brave are always so.

Vald. How can I be otherwise with such an angel to prompt me? No; the braggard may live in safety for me; I will not harm one hair of his head.

Liv. I thank you, dear Valdemere! and now to recompense your goodness, I'll shew the beautiful gem I promised you: follow me.

Vald. Yes, bewitching Maid! to the world's end, to the bottom of the ocean, to the cannon's brazen mouth, I would follow thee.

[EXEUNT.

SCENE III.—THE COUNTESS'S DRESSING ROOM.

She enters from an inner Chamber with a small shagreen Case in her hand, followed by JEANETTA, *carrying a Casket which she sets upon a Table.*

Countess. Jeanetta! let me take a last look of those dear things before I part with them for ever.

Jean. I'm sure, my lady, they are so handsome, and you look so handsome when you wear them, it would go to my heart to part with them.

Countess. But my dear boy must have money, Jeanetta, and I have been expensive myself. (*Opens the casket, and looks at the jewels.*) My diamonds, my pearls, my rubies,

my darlings! for the sake of a still greater darling I must part with you all.

Jean. But if I might presume to speak, my lady; don't you indulge the young Count too much in extravagance?

Countess. O no, Jeanetta; I doat upon him: it is this amiable weakness of character which all the world remarks and admires in me. And he loves me entirely too; he would sacrifice his life for my sake.

Jean. He'll sacrifice nothing else, however; for he never gives up the smallest convenience of his own to oblige you.

Countess. Small things are of no consequence: he would give up for me, I am confident, the thing most dear to his heart: and for him—to see him lord of this castle and its domains, and occupying in society the brilliant place that becomes him, I would—what would I not sacrifice!

Jean. Were he to live on the fortune he has, and marry where he is attach'd, he might perhaps be happier.

Countess. Happier! Were he mean enough to be happy so—contemptible thought!—I would see him in his grave rather.—But no more of this: have you seen Hovelberg? You say he is waiting below.

Jean. Yes, Madam, and a friend with him; an Armenian Jew-merchant, who will, he says, go halves in his purchases, and enable him to give you a better price for the jewels, as he is himself rather low in cash at present.

Countess. Well; I'll object to neither Jew nor Infidel that puts money into my pocket. (*Holding up a ruby necklace.*) This should fetch something considerable.

Jean. O la, Madam! you won't part with that surely: your neck is like alabaster under it. Did you but know how they admired you at Prince Dormach's the last time you wore it.—I would sell the very gown from my back ere I parted with it.

Countess. So they admired me at Prince Dormach's then?

Jean. O dear, my lady! the Prince's valet told me, though two young beauties from Brussels were there, nobody spoke of any one but you.

Countess. Well; to please thee, then, I'll keep it.

Jean. La! here is a little emerald ring, my lady; those brokers will despise such a trifle, and give you a mere nothing for it—La, who would think it! it fits my fingers to a hair. It must be a mort too large for your delicate hand.

Countess. Keep it for thyself then, since it fits thee. He was a great fool who gave it me, and had it made of that awkward size.

Jean. I thank you, my lady; I wish you would give me every thing in this precious casket that has not been the gift of a sage.

Countess. Thou art right, child. It would put many a hundred louis-d'ors into thy pocket, and leave scarcely a marverdi for myself.—A rich Knight of Malta gave me these (*holding up a string of pearls,*) whose bandy legs were trick'd out most delicately in fine-clocked hose of the nicest and richest embroidery. Rest his soul! I made as much of those legs as the hosier did.

Jean. I doubt it not, Madam, and deserved what you earned full as well.

Countess. (*looking again at her pearls.*) There is not a flaw in any of them.

Jean. Aye; commend me to such legs! had they been straighter, the pearls had been worse.

Countess. This amber box with brilliants I had from an old croaking Marquis, who pestered every music room in the principality to the day of his death, with notes that would have frightened a peacock. As long as he sang, poor man! I considered myself as having a salary on the musical establishment at the rate of two hundred ducats per month.

Jean. Aye, God send that all the old Marquises in these parts, would croak for us at this rate.

Countess. I have no reason to complain: my present friend bleeds as freely as any of his predecessors.

Jean. So he should, my Lady. Such nonsense as he writes ought not to be praised for a trifle. I would not do it, I'm sure.

Countess. Dost thou ever praise then for profit?

Jean. To be honest with you, Madam, I have done it, as who has not? But never since I entered your ladyship's service; for why should you reward me for praising you, when all the world does it for nothing?—No, no, my Lady; you are too wise for that.

Countess. There is somebody at the door.

Jean. It is Hovelberg.

Countess. Open then, but let nobody else in.

(Jean *opens the door, and* Hovelberg *enters, followed by Baron* Baurchel, *disguised as an Armenian Jew.*)

Countess. I am happy to see you, dear Hovelberg; and this Gentleman also, (*curtesying to the* Bar.) I know it is only a friend whom we may trust, that you would introduce to me on the present occasion.

Hov. To be sure, Madam: a friend we may depend on. (*Drawing* Countess *aside, and speaking in her ear.*) A man of few words: better to do in this quarter, than this. (*Pointing first to his pocket, and then to his head.*) And that is a good man, you know, to be well with.

Countess. O the best stuff in the world for making a friend of. (*Returning to the* Bar.) Sir, I have the highest regard and esteem for you.

Bar. (*in a feigned voice.*) On vatch account, Madam?

Countess. O good Sir! on every account.

Bar. You lov'sh not my religion?

Countess. I respect and reverence it profoundly.

Bar. You lov'sh not my pershon?

Countess. It is interesting and engaging, most assuredly.

Bar. Nobody telsh me sho before.

Countess. Because the world is full of envious people, who will not tell you truths that are agreeable.

Bar. (*nodding assent.*) Now I understant.

Countess. Yes, dear Sir; you must do so; your understanding is unquestionable. (*Looking archly to* Hovel.) And now, Gentlemen, do me the honour to be seated, and examine these jewels attentively.

Hov. We would rather stand, if you'll permit us.

Countess. (*aside to* Hovel., *while the* Baron *examines the jewels.*) My dear Hovelberg, be liberal; for the sum I want is a large one, and those jewels would procure it for me any where; only, regarding you as my friend, I gave you the first offer.—But your friend, methinks, examines every thing with great curiosity.

Hov. Yes, poor man! he likes to appear as knowing as he can: this is but natural, you know, when one is deficient in the upper department.—But he'll pay like a Prince, if you flatter and amuse him.

Bar. Vasht fine stones! Vasht pretty ornaments! (*To* Countess.) You dishposhe of all deshe?

Countess. Yes, every thing.

Bar. Dere be gifsh here, no doubt, from de dear friensh.

Hov. Or some favoured lover, perhaps.

Countess. (*sighing affectedly.*) Perhaps so; but I must part with them all.

Bar. (*aside to* Hov.) Nay, she has some tenderness for me: put her not to too severe a trial.

Hov. (*aside.*) We shall see.

Bar. (*returning to* Countess.) You be woman; and all womansh have de affections for some one lover or frient.

Countess. O how good and amiable and considerate you are! I have indeed a heart formed for tenderness.

Bar. (*drawing* Hovel *aside again.*) She does love me, Hovelberg: tempt her not with an extravagant price for the picture.

Hov. (*aside.*) I'll take a better way of managing it. (*Returning to the* Countess.) My Friend desires me to say, Madam, that, if there is any thing here you particularly value, he'll advance you money upon it, which you may pay at your leisure, and you shall preserve it.

Countess. (*to* Baron.) How generous you are, my dear Sir! Yes; there is one thing I would keep.

Bar. (*eagerly.*) One ting—dere be one ting; tish picture, perhaps.

Countess. This ruby necklace.

Bar. You sell tish picture, den?

Countess. To be sure, if you'll purchase it.

Hov. The diamonds are valuable, indeed; but you will not sell the painting?

Countess. That will depend on the price you offer for it.

Hov. Being a portrait, it is of no value at all, but to those who have a regard for the original.

Jean. And what part of the world do they live in, Mr. Hovelberg? Can you find them out any where?

Countess. Nay, peace, Jeanetta.—As a portrait, indeed, it is of no value to any body, but, as a characteristic old head, it should fetch a good price. (*Shewing it to* Baron.) Observe, my dear Sir, that air of conceit and absurdity over the whole figure: to those who have a taste for the whimsical and ridiculous, it would be invaluable. Don't you perceive it?

Bar. Not very sure.

Countess. Not sure! Look at it again. See how the eyes are turned languishingly aside, as if he were repeating, "Dear gentle idol of a heart too fond." (*Mimicking the* Baron's *natural voice.*)

Hov. Ha, ha, ha! Your mimickry is excellent, Countess. Is it not, Friend Johnadab?

Bar. O, vasht comical.

Hov. (*aside to him.*) She has a good talent.

Bar. (*aside.*) Shrewd witch! The words of my last sonnet, indeed; but I did not repeat them so.

Hov. (*aloud.*) Though you are an admirable mimick, Madam, my Friend Johnadab does not think your imitation of the Baron, entirely correct.

Countess. (*alarmed.*) He knows the Baron, then; I have been very imprudent.—But pray don't suppose I meant any disrespect to the worthy Baron, whom I esteem very much.

Bar. O vasht much!

Hov. Be not uneasy, Madam; my Friend will be secret, and loves a joke mightily.

Countess. I'll trust, then, to his honour: and since he does not like my imitation of the Baron, he shall have it from one who does it better than I. Jeanetta, amuse this worthy gentleman by repeating the Baron's last sonnet.

Jean. Nay, my Lady, you make me do it so often, I'm tired of taking him off.

Countess. Do as you are bid, Child.

Jean. "Dear gentle idol of a heart too fond,
"Why doth that eye of sweetest sympathy———"

Hov. Ha, ha, ha! Excellent!

Bar. (*off his guard.*) By Heaven, this is too bad! Your servants taught to turn me into ridicule!

Countess. (*starting.*) How's this? Mercy on me!

Hov. Be not alarmed, Countess; I thought he would surprise you. My friend is the best mimick in Europe.

Countess. I can scarcely recover my surprise. (*To* Baron.) My dear Sir, I cannot praise you enough. You have a wonderful

talent. The Baron's own mouth could not utter his voice more perfectly than yours.

Bar. (*pulling off his cap and beard.*) No, Madam, not easily. (Jean. *shrieks out and the* Countess *stands in stupid amazement.*) This disguise, Madam, has procured for me a specimen of the amiable dispositions of a heart formed for tenderness, with a sample of your talents for mimickry into the bargain; and so I wish you good day, with thanks for my morning's amusement.

Countess. (*recovering herself.*) Ha, ha, ha! You understand mumming very well, Baron, but I still better. I acted my part well.

Bar. Better than well, Madam: it was the counter-part of my enacting the Barón.

Jean. Indeed, dear Baron, the Countess knew it was you, and so did I too. Indeed, indeed we did. I'm sure it is a very good joke: I wonder we don't laugh more at it than we do.

Bar. Be quiet, subordinate Imp of this arch Tempter! My thraldom is at an end; and all the jewels in that shameful heap were not too great a price for such emancipation. (*Bowing very low to* Countess.) Adieu most amiable, most sentimental, most disinterested of women! [Exit.

Countess. Hovelberg, you have betrayed me.

Hov. How so, Madam? You told me yourself you was the most sincere woman in the world; the Baron doubted your regard for him; how could I then dissuade him from putting it to the proof, unless I had doubted your word, Madam? An insult you could never have pardoned.

Countess. What, you laugh at me, too, you villain! (Exit Hovel.) Oh! I am ruined, derided and betrayed! (*Throws herself into a chair, covering her face with her hand, while* Jeanetta *endeavours to comfort her.*)

Jean. Be not so cast down, my Lady, there are more than one rich fool in the world, and you have a good knack at finding them out.

Countess. O, that I should have been so unguarded! That I should never have suspected!

Jean. Aye, with his vasht this, and his vasht that: it was, as he said, vasht comical that we did not.

Countess. Bring not his detested words again to my ears; I can't endure the sound of them.

Enter Valdemere.

Vald. Well, Madam, you can answer my demands now, I hope: Hovelberg has been with you. Money, money, my dear mother! (*Holding out his hand.*) There is a fair broad palm to receive it; and here (*kissing her hand coaxingly*) is a sweet little hand to bestow it.

Countess. (*pushing him away sternly.*) Thy inconsiderate prodigality has been most disastrous. Had'st thou been less thoughtless, less profuse—a small portion of prudence and economy would have made us independent of every dotard's humour.

Vald. Notable virtues indeed, Madam; but where was I to learn them, pray? Did you ever before recommend them to me, by either precept or example? Prudence! Economy! What has befallen you? I'm sure there is something wrong, when such words come from your lips.—Ha! in tears, too! Hovelberg has brought no money then?

Countess. No, no, Barbarian? He has ruined me.

Vald. How so?

Countess. I cannot tell thee; it would suffocate me.

Jean. La, Count! My Lady may well call him Barbarian. He brought the old Baron with him to purchase the jewels, disguised like an Armenian Jew; and when bargaining with her for his own picture, my Lady said something of the original not much to his liking, and so the old fool tore off his disguise and bounced out of the room in a great passion.

Vald. By my faith, this is unlucky! I depended on touching 500 louis d'ors immediately.

Countess. Thinking only of yourself still, when you may well guess how I am distressed. —I shall never again find such a liberal old cully as he.

Vald. Yes you will, Mother: more readily than I shall find the 500 louis.—I owe half that sum to Count Pugstoff, for losses at the billiard table; all the velvet and embroidery, the defunct suits of two passing years haunt me wherever I go, in the form of unmannerly tailors: and, besides all this, there is a sweet pretty Arabian in the stables of Huckston, my jockey, that I am dying to be master of.—By my faith, it is very hard! Had you no suspicion? How came you to be so much off your guard?

Countess. I believe it was fated to be so, and therefore I was blinded for the moment. I dreamt last night that I had but one tooth in my head, and it dropped on the ground at my feet. This, it is said, betokens the loss of a friend by death, and I trembled for thee, my child; but now, too surely, my dream is explained and accomplished.

Vald. And, methinks, you would have preferred the first interpretation.

Countess. Ah! ungrateful Boy! You know too well how I have doated on you.

Vald. I do know too well: it has done me little good, I fear.

Countess. It has done me little good, I'm sure, since this is all the gratitude thou hast. I should never, but for thee, have become the flatterer of those I despise, to amass those odious jewels.

Vald. Ha! the jewels are still here then! I shall have my louis' still. Thank you, dear Mother, that you did not part with them, at

least. (*Kissing her hand, hastily, and running to the table.*) I'll soon dispose of them all.

Countess. (*running after him.*) No, no! not so fast, Valdemere: thou wilt not take them all. Haste thee, Jeanetta, and save some of them.

(*They all scramble round the table for the jewels, and the scene closes.*)

ACT III.

Scene I.—Before the gate of the castle.

Enter Nina, who crosses the Stage timidly, stopping once or twice, and then, with hesitation, giving a gentle knock at the gate. Enter Porter from the gate, which he opens.

Porter. (*after waiting to hear her speak.*) 'hat do you want, young woman? Did u only knock for amusement?

Nin. No, Sir; is Count Valdemere in the stle? I would speak with him, if he is at sure.

Port. He is in the castle; but as to speak- with him, no man, of less consequence in his valet, can answer that question.

Enter Lorimore, by the opposite side.

re he is. You come opportunely, Mr. rimore; this young person would speak h your Master.

Lor. (*aside.*) O, Nina, I see. (*Aloud.*) How you do, my pretty Nina? You can't speak h my Master, indeed; but you may speak h the next most agreeable personage in se parts, my Master's man, as long as you ise; and that, be assured, is a far better ig for your purpose, my Princess.

Nin. Dare you insult me! You durst not e have done it.—I do not ask then to see : but give him this letter.

Lor. (*taking the letter.*) Do you wish this cious piece to be read, Child, or to be nt?

Nin. Why ask that? To be read, certainly.

Lor. I must not give it to the Count, then, keep it to myself: and if you'll just al- me to make the slight alteration of put- Lorimore the valet for Valdemere the tter, as I read, it will be a very pretty, rea- able letter, and one that may advance your our withal.

Nin. Audacious Coxcomb! Give it me in. (*Snatches the letter from him, and is away.*)

Lor. She is as proud as that little devil of age, her brother.

(Enter Page behind from the gate.)

Page. The more devil he be, the fitter ipany for you. Whom spoke you to? ing Nina.) Oh, oh! Is Nina here?——— a, Nina! (*Running after her.*)

Nin. (*returning.*) My dear Theodore, is it thee? I did not ask for thee, lest thou should'st chide me for coming to the castle.

Page. I won't chide, but I'm sorry to see thee here. Fie, woman! thou art the daughter of as brave an Officer, though a poor one, as any in the service; art thou not ashamed to come, thus meanly, after a lover who despises thee?

Nin. He promised to marry me.

Page. He promised a fiddle-stick! Poor deluded simpleton!

Nin. Ah, dost thou chide me, boy as thou art?

Page. Who is there to chide thee now, when both our parents are dead? But as they would have done, so do I, Sister; I chide thee, and love thee too.—Go now; return to the good woman from whose house thou hast stolen away, and I'll buy thee a new gown as soon as my quarter's salary is paid me.

Nin. Silly child, what care I for a new gown? But if thou hast any pity for me, give this letter to thy master.

Page. I will, I will: but go thy ways now; there is a gentleman coming. And do, dear Nina, return no more to the castle till I send thee word. Good be with thee, poor simpleton!

[Exit Nina, and enter Dartz by the opposite side.

Dart. Is it thy sister thou hast parted from? I met her in the wood this morning; she need not avoid me now.

Page. Let her go, Sir; the farther she is from the castle the better.

Dart. Thou hast a letter in thy hand.

Page. Yes, Sir.

Dart. Which thou art to give to the Count.

Page. No, Sir; I'll see him choked first. (*Tearing the letter.*)

Dart. Nay, see what it contains ere thou destroyest it.

Page. (*putting it together again and reading it.*) Only upbraiding his unkindness, and stuff of that sort, with some nonsense about a dream she has had, which makes her afraid she shall never see him again.

Dart. Let me look. (*After reading it.*) This letter may be useful. Come with me, my little friend; and we'll devise a way of revenging thy sister on her cruel seducer.

Page. Will you? I'll worship you like a saint of the calendar if you do this.

Dart. (*considering.*) Is not your master somewhat superstitious?

Page. Marry is he! but mightily afraid to be thought so. He laughed at me when the bad fever prevailed for wearing a charm on my breast against infection; but the very next night, when he went to bed, what should drop out, think you, as he opened his vest, but the very same charm which he had procured immediately, and worn with such secrecy, that even Valet Lorimore knew nothing of the matter.

Dart. This is good; come with me, and I instruct thee what to do with thy letter.
[Exeun

Scene II.—Valdemere's dressing room.

Enter Page treading softly on tiptoe, and looking about the Room.

Page. Aye; the coast is clear, and the door of his chamber is a-jar; now is my time. (*Pulling the torn letter from his pocket, and stamping on the floor as he raises his voice.*) There, cursed letter, I'll make an end of thee! Give thee to my master, indeed! I'll give thee to the devil first. (*Pretending to tear the letter, and strew the pieces about, while* Valdemere *looking from the door of his chamber, steals behind him and seizes his hands with the remainder of the letter in them.*) Mercy on me! is it you, my Lord?

Vald. What art thou doing? What scares thee so? What letter is this? Let me see it.

Page. O no, my Lord, I beseech you, for your own sake, don't read it.

Vald. Why should not I read it, Boy?

Page. Lud, I don't know! you may not mind it, perhaps; but were any body to send such a letter to me, I should be mainly terrified. To be sure, death comes as they say, at his own time, and we can't keep him away, though we should hang ourselves; but one don't like to be told beforehand the very year or day we are to die, neither.

Vald. The year and day! give me the letter: give it me immediately. (*Snatching the fragments of the letter from him, and picking up a piece or two from the floor, which he puts together hastily on a table near the front of the stage.*) I can't make it piece any way.

Page. So much the better, my Lord: don't try to do it.

Vald. It is Nina's hand, I see, but I can make no sense of it.—Aye, now it will do (*reading.*) "I have been terrified with a dream, and fear I shall see you no more." But where is the dream; it is torn off; give it me.

Page. I have it not.

Vald. Thou liest! give it me, I say.

Page. Lud have mercy! as I tore it off just now, your black spaniel ran away with it.

Vald. No, varlet, that is a sham; go find it; thou knowest where it is well enough.

Page. Indeed, my Lord, if it is not in the black spaniel's custody it is no where else that I know of.

Vald. (*reading again.*) I fear I shall see you no more! But it may be her own death as well as mine, that her dream has foretold; and therefore she may see me no more.

Page. Very true, you had better think so; though it does not often happen that a woman is killed at a siege.

Vald. At a siege!

Page. Pest take this hasty tongue of mine; I could bite it off for the tricks it plays me.

Vald. At a siege!

Page. O, never mind it, Sir. It may be some lie after all: some wicked invention to make you afraid.

Vald. (*sternly.*) What sayest thou?

Page. O no! I don't mean afraid; only uneasy as it were —— no, no! not uneasy neither; only somewhat as you feel at present, my Lord; you know best what to call it.

Vald. At a siege!

Page. Dear my Lord; those words are glued to your tongue.

Vald. (*not heeding him.*) My grandfather perished at a siege, and his grandfather also: is this fate decreed in our family for alternate generations? (*Sinks into a chair by the table and* Page *seeing him so much absorbed, comes close to him, staring curiously in his face.*)

Vald. Take thy varlet's face out of my sight; why art thou so near me? Leave the room, I say.
[Exit Page

(*Rising and pacing to and fro as he speaks to himself.*)

A hundred dreams prove false for one that prefigures any real event.—It should not have been, however: my mother should have found for me some other occupation than a military life. —— Quit it? No; I can't do that: the world would cry out upon me; Livia would despise me.—'Tis a strange thing that women who can't fight themselves, should so eagerly push us to the work.——Pooh! am I a fool that it seizes me thus?——I would this boy, however, had really destroyed the letter.

Enter Dartz, looking at Vald: some time before he speaks.

Dart. (*aside.*) This will do; it is working with him. (*Aloud, advancing.*) My dear Count;—but don't start; I bring no bad tidings; come to beg a favour of you.

Vald. (*recovering himself.*) Say you are come to oblige me.

Dart. I thank you, Valdemere: but faith I'm ashamed to mention it; you will laugh at me for being so superstitious.

Vald. Ha! somebody has been dreaming about you too.

Dart. Should you deem me very credulous if a thing of this nature had power to disturb me?

Vald. 'Tis even so; they have been dreaming all over the house. Ha, ha, ha! And thou art really uneasy about such flummery as this: ha, ha, ha! ha, ha, ha! This is admirable—delightful!—ha, ha, ha, ha!

Dart. Be more moderate with your merriment: your tears and your laughter come so strangely together, one would take you for an hysterical girl.

Vald. I can't choose but laugh at your dreamers; ha, ha, ha!

Dart. Don't laugh at me then; for I'm neither a dreamer, or believer in dreams.

Vald. (*becoming serious at once.*) No: what is it then?

Dart. I'm almost ashamed to tell you, yet I'll throw myself on your mercy and do it.—I am in love, then, and fearful of the fortunes of war; for you know we must expect sharp fighting this ensuing campaign.

Vald. (*ruefully.*) You think so?

Dart. I'm certain of it. Now, though I have no faith in dreams, I must own I have some in fortune-tellers; and there is a famous one just come to the castle, whom I would gladly consult. Will you permit me to bring him to your inner apartment there; that he may tell me of my future destiny, whatever his art reveal to him? Laugh as you please, but refuse me not this favour; for there is no other room in the castle where I can meet him, secure from interruption.

Vald. (*smiling affectedly.*) And thou art really in earnest with this folly?

Dart. When you have heard the wonderful things this wizard has foretold, you will not call it folly.

Vald. Can'st thou tell me any of them?

Dart. Take a turn with me on the terrace, and thou shalt hear things that will astonish thee.

Vald. Ha, ha! it is whimsical to see thee so serious. Such stories are pleasant amusement: I'll attend thee most willingly.

[Exeunt.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—A SMALL ROOM IN VALDEMERE'S APARTMENTS; BARON BAURCHEL IS DISCOVERED IN THE DISGUISE OF A FORTUNE-TELLER WITH DARTZ STANDING BY HIM, ADJUSTING PART OF HIS DRESS.

Dart. 'Twill do well enough. Stand majestically by this great chair, with your worsted robe thrown over the arm of it; it will spread out your figure, and make it more imposing.—Bravo! You assume the astrological dignity to admiration; the rolling of your eyes under that black hood almost appals me. Be as good an astrologer as you have been an Armenian Jew, Baron, and we shall be triumphant.

Bar. As good, Dartz! If I am not a dolt, I shall be better: for there is no danger of losing my temper now; and being fairly engaged in it, methinks I could assume as many shapes as Proteus, to be revenged on this false Hyena and her detestable cub.

Dart. Aye, that is your true spirit. But I must leave you now, and wait in the antiroom for the Count, who will be here presently.

[Exit.

Bar. (*after musing some time.*) Superlative baseness and ingratitude! That sonnet, of all the sonnets I ever wrote, is the most exquisitely feeling and tender.—When I read it to her, she wept.—Were her tears feigned?—I can't believe it.—Assassins will weep at a high-wrought scene of tragedy, and cut the author's throat when it is over.——Even so.—It suited her purposes better to laugh at my verses, than acknowledge their genuine effect; and so, forgetting every kindness she owed me,——O the detestable worlding! I'll——— Hush, hush, hush! they are coming.

Re-enter DARTZ, followed by VALDEMERE, who walks shrinkingly behind, peeping past his shoulder to the BARON, who slightly inclines his body, putting his hand with great solemnity three times to his forehead.

Dart. (*aside to* Vald. *after a pause.*) Faith, Valdemere, I dare scarcely speak to him; 'tis well you are with me; will you speak to him?

Vald. No; 'tis your own affair; stand to it yourself.

Dart. (*aloud.*) Learned and gifted Mortal, we come to thee.

Vald. (*aside, jogging his arm.*) Don't say *we*—'tis your own affair entirely.

Dart. Well, I should say, gifted Sage, not *we* but *I* come to thee, to know what fortune is abiding me in this up-and-down world. I am a lover and a soldier, and liable, as both, to great vicissitudes.

Bar. Thou say'st truly, my Son. And who is this young man so much wiser than thyself, who does not desire to look into futurity?

Dart. It is my friend.

Bar. (*after examining the faces of both for some time.*) Say more than friend.

Dart. How so?

Bar. (*still continuing to gaze alternately at them.*) 'Tis very wonderful: in all the years of my occult experience, I never met the like before, but once.

Vald. (*aside to* Dart.) What does he mean? Ask him, Man.

Dart. You never met the like but once! What mean you, Father?

Bar. (*answers not, but continues to look at them, while* Vald., *unable to bear it longer, shrinks again behind* Dart.) Shrink not back, young Man: my eyes make not the fate they see, and cannot do you harm.—'Tis wonderful! There is not in your two faces one trait of resemblance, yet your fortunes in the self-same mould are cast: ye are in fate twin-brothers.

Dart. Indeed! then my friend need only listen to my fortune, and he'll have his own into the bargain.

Bar. Nay, nay, my Sons, be advised, and inquire not into futurity. They are the happiest men, who have fewest dealings with such miserable beings as myself. Beings who are compelled to know the impending evils of hapless humanity without the power

of averting them. Be advised, and suppress unprofitable curiosity.

Dart. By my fay, Sage! I cannot suppress it.

Bar. Then let your friend go. He is wise enough not to wish to know his future fate, and I have already said, you are in this twin-brothers.

Dart. Retire then, Valdemere.

Vald. (*agitated and irresolute.*) I had better, perhaps.——Yet there is within me a strange and perverse craving——I will retire (*going to the door, and stopping short.*) Live in fearful ignorance, fancying evils that may never be! 'Twere better to know all at once. (*Returning.*) Is it our general fortunes only, or is there some particular circumstance of our fate, now present to your mind, of which you advise us to be ignorant?

Bar. There is ——

Vald. (*pulling* Dart. *by the arm.*) Come away, come away; don't hear it.

Dart. I am bound by some spell; I must stay to hear it.

Vald. I am certainly bound also; I know not how it is; I must hear it too.

Bar. Be it as you will. (*After writing characters on a table, with other mummeries.*) Propose your questions.

Dart. The name, age and quality, of her who is my love. (Bar. *writes again.*) The initials of her name I protest, and her age to a day, nineteen years and a half. And her quality, good Father?

Bar. Only daughter and heiress of an eminent Dutch butter-dealer.

Dart. Nay, you are scarcely right there, Sage; you might at least have called him Burgo-master.—But let it pass. She loves me, I hope. (Bar. *nods.*) I knew it. And now let me know if she shall ever be my wife; and how many children we shall have.

Vald. (*aside to* Dart.) Deuce take wife and children too! What is all this drivling for?

Dart. (*aside to him.*) I thought you were in love as well as myself.

Vald. So I am; but be satisfied that she loves you, and pass on to things of deeper import.

Dart. (*aside.*) Can any thing be of deeper import? (*Aloud.*) I should like very well, gifted Father, to have two or three black haired burly knaves, and a little fair damsel to play with.

Vald. (*aside to* Dart.) Would they were all drowned in a horse-pond! Look how ruefully the Sage shakes his head at thee: wife or children thou wilt never have.

Dart. Shall I never be married, Father? What shall prevent it?

Bar. Death.

Dart. Shall I lose her? (*Turning to* Vald.) Do you not tremble for Livia?

Vald. Is it her death? Did he say so? Ask him.

Bar. Death will prevent it.—Let me leave you.

Vald. (*seizing the* Baron's *robe.*) Whose death? Whose death? Is it only the Lady's?

Bar. Nay, do not detain me. There is a deep depression on my mind. Good-night to you! I'll tell you the remainder when you are better prepared to hear it.

Dart. No, no! the present time is the best.

Vald. (*in a feeble voice.*) You had better let him go.

Dart. (*catching hold of the* Bar.) You must not leave us in this tremendous uncertainty. Whose death shall prevent my marriage?

Bar. Let me examine, then. Stretch out your hand. (Dartz *holds out his hand, and* Vald. *involuntarily does the same, but draws it back again, as* Bar. *begins to inspect it.*) Nay, don't draw back your hand: I must examine both palms to see if the line of death be there.

Dart. The line of death must be on every man's hand.

Bar. But if it be early or impending death, the waving of the shroud will lie across it. (Vald. *shudders and turns away his head, and the* Bar., *after looking at both their hands, starts back from them, and shakes his head piteously.*)

Dart. What is the matter, Father? What is the matter?

Bar. Ask not; I will not tell what I know; nothing shall compel me. [Exit *hastily.*

Vald. (*turning round.*) Is he gone? Went he by the door?

Dart. What way he went, I know not. He has vanished, I believe: did you hear his steps on the floor?

Vald. I heard nothing.

Dart. (*after a short pause.*) How do you feel, Count?

Vald. Ha! do you feel it too?

Dart. Feel what?

Vald. As if a cold shroud were drawn over you.

Dart. Aye, so I think I do.——But never mind it: we may still have some good months or weeks before us; let us go to the banquet and put a merry face upon it: a cup of wine will warm us again. What, though my grandam dreamt at my birth that I should be slain in a breach, and the weird witch of Croninberg confirmed it: I'll live and be merry while I may.

Vald. Ha! and thy grandam had such a dream!

Dart. Never mind it: a cup of wine will soon cheer us again.

Vald. Would to God I had one now!

Dart. You have no time to take wine at present: I hear a bustle below; they are going to the grotto already.—Who's at the door? (*Opens the door.*) Your valet with your new suit for the banquet. I'll leave you then. [Exit Dartz, *and enter* Lorimore *with a suit of clothes over his arm, followed by* Page.)

Lor. I have waited this half hour, my Lord, to hear your bell, and the ladies are

waiting for you to go to the grotto. Look at this coat, my Lord: the fashion of it is exquisite, and it has such an air with it; there is not, besides yourself, a man in the empire that would know how to wear it.

Page. His consummate valet excepted.

Lor. Hold your peace, Sirrah.——Look here, my Lord; if I had not myself given the tailor a few hints, he could never have had genius enough to finish it in this style. I'd give a ducat that the Marquis De Florimel's valet could see it. He pretends——But you don't look at it, my Lord: what is the matter with you?

Vald. (*eagerly.*) Is any thing the matter?

Lor. Nothing, my Lord; but the ladies are waiting for you to go with them to the grotto: won't you be pleased to put on your new coat?

Vald. Put it on then. (*Stretching out his arms to put on the coat.*)

Lor. But we must first take off the old coat.

Vald. I forgot that. (*Trying to pull off his coat.*) It sticks strangely to me: d'off it if thou can'st.

Lor. (*after pulling off his coat.*) Now, my Lord thrust your arm into this beautiful sleeve; the whole *beau monde* of Paris can't shew you its fellow.—That is the wrong arm, my lord.

Vald. It will do; it will do.

Lor. Pardon me, my Lord: your left arm won't do for the right sleeve of the coat.

Vald. (*holding out his other arm, and fumbling some time.*) There is no hole at all to put my arm into.

Lor. Nay you push your hand past it; here, here.

Vald. Where sayest thou? 'Tis mightily perplexed.

Page. (*aside to himself.*) Either the coat or the coat's master is perplexed enough. (*Aloud, offering him his hat.*) You won't go, my Lord, without your new hat and plume.

Vald Plume?

Page. Yes, my Lord, and it will wave so handsomely too, for the company walk by torch-light in procession.

Vald. Let them move on, and I'll follow.

Page. No, they can't go without you, my Lord.

Vald. How is it? Am I one of the pall-bearers?

Page. It is not a funeral, my Lord.

Vald. I forgot; the chillness of the night has bewildered me.

Lor. You are not well, my Lord; what is the matter with you?

Vald. Nothing, leave me alone for a little.

Lor. Will you not join the company? The procession is prepared to set out.

Vald. Aye, very true; tell me when they move the body, and I'll follow it.

Page. He, he, he! a funeral again.

Lor. Unmannerly imp; what art thou snickering at? (*To* Vald. *in a loud distinct voice.*) It is not a funeral, my Lord. The lady Livia, and the Countess your mother, are going to the grotto, and are waiting impatiently below till you join them.

Vald. (*rubbing his forehead.*) It is so: how went it out of my head? That wine after dinner must have fuddled me. I'll join them immediately.

Lor. Lean on me, my lord; you are not well, I fear.

Vald. No, no! the fumes of that diabolical champaign have left my head now.

Lor. It must have been mixed with some black drug, I think, to produce such a sombre intoxication.

Page. It may rest in the cellar long enough for me; I'll none on't.

Lor. Peace, young Sir; and go before with one of these lights.

[EXEUNT, Page *lighting them.*

SCENE II.—AN ARCHED GROTTO, THE ROOF AND SIDES OF WHICH ARE CRUSTED OVER WITH SHELLS AND CORALS, &C.; A BANQUET SET OUT, ORNAMENTED WITH LAMPS AND FESTOONS OF FLOWERS.

Enter COUNTESS, led in by DARTZ, and LIVIA by VALDEMERE, two other Ladies by the BARON and WALTER BAURCHEL, Page and Attendants following.

Liv. Welcome all to my sea-nymph's hall; and do me the honour to place yourselves at table, as best pleases your fancy, without ceremony.—If you hear any sound without, 'tis but the rolling of forty fathom water over-head; and nothing can intrude on our merriment, but a whale, or a mermaid, or a dolphin.

Walt. This same sea-nymph must have an ingenious art of cultivating roses in the bottom of the ocean.

Liv. It must be a perfect contrivance indeed that escapes the correct taste of Mr. Walter Baurchel. Fruit and ices perhaps may likewise be an incongruity: shall I order them away, and feast you on salt-water and limpits?

Bar. Aye, pickle him up with brine, in a corner by himself; for he has a secret sympathy with every thing uncherishing and pungent.

Liv. Do me the honour to take your places. I can pretty well divine which of the ladies will be your charge, gentle Baron.—But how is this? The Countess and you exchange strange looks, methinks, as if you did not know one another.

Bar. Some people exchange strange looks, fair Livia, from the opposite cause.

Liv. I don't comprehend you: should you have preferred being in masks? that indeed would have been a less common amusement.

Bar. By no means, Madam; the Countess and I meeting one another unmasked is a very uncommon one.

Countess. You know best, Baron, as far as

you are yourself concerned: you always appeared to me a good and amiable man, and a most tender and elegant poet.

Bar. Of which, Madam, you always took great care to inform me, as a sincere and disinterested friend.

Liv. Ha! what is all this? Poo, poo! take your places together as usual: a love-quarrel never mars merry-making.

Walt. Yes, tender doves! let them smooth down their ruffled feathers by one another as sweetly as they can. Why should you, Madam, give yourself any uneasiness about it.—But the Count, methinks, is less sprightly than usual: there are no more love-quarrels, I hope, in the party.

Liv. (*looking at* Vald.) Indeed you are very silent: I have been too much occupied to observe it before. You don't like my grotto, I fear.

Vald. Pardon me! I like it very well: I like it very much.

Liv. But this is not your usual manner of expressing approbation.

Vald. Is it not? you do me honour to remember it. (*Speaking confusedly as the company sit down to table.*) My spirits are very— that is to say, not altogether, but considerably—

Dart. Low, Valdemere?

Vald. (*snatching up a glass and filling a bumper of wine, which he swallows hastily.*) No, Dartz; light as a feather. My tongue was so confoundedly parch'd: this wine is excellent (*drinking another bumper.*) There is more beauty in these decorations than I was aware of: the effect, the taste is incomparable. (*Drinks again.*) It is truly exquisite.

Walt. The champaign you mean, Count. I should have guess'd as much.

Vald. No, no; the decorations.——Is it champaign? Let me judge of its flavour more considerately; (*drinks again.*) upon honour it is fit for the table of a god.—But our hostess *is* a divinity, and 't's nectar we quaff at her board.—Wine mon earthly wine! I'll thrust any man thro' with my rapier that says it is but wine.

Bar. Keep your courage for a better cause, Count. Report says the enemy are near us; and you may soon have the honour to exert it in defence of your divinity.

Walt. Which will be a sacred war, you know, and will entitle you, perhaps, to the glory of martyrdom.

Vald. The enemy?

Walt. Aye, report says they are near us.

Vald. Be it so: I shall be prepared for them. (*drinks again.*)

Dart. (*aside to* Walt.) By my faith, he will be prepared for them, for he'll fill himself mortal drunk, and frustrate our project entirely. (*Aside to* Page.) Go, boy, and bid them make haste: thou understand'st me?

Page. (*aside.*) Trust me for that: the Philistines shall be upon him immediately.

Countess. Valdemere is immeasurably fond *of war and of military glory, which the tenderness of a too fearful mother has hitherto with difficulty restrained; and in your cause, charming Livia, he will be enthusiastically devoted.*

Liv. I claim him then as my Knight, whene'er I stand in need of his valorous arms; though it may, perhaps, prove but a troublesome honour.

Vald. It is an honour I would purchase—aye, purchase with a thousand lives———I say it, divine Livia, with a thousand lives.—— Life!—life!—What is it? but the breath of a moment: I scorn it. (*Getting up from table, and reeling about.*) The enemy did they say? Let an host of them come: this sword shall devour every mother's son of them.—I'm prepared for them all.

Bar. (*aside to* Dart.) He is too well prepared; we were foolish to let him drink so much.

Countess. (*aside to* Vald.) Be seated again; you disturb the company.

Vald. (*still reeling about.*) Aye, divine Livia; but the breath of a moment; I scorn it. (*An alarm without: Re-enter* Page; *as if much frightened.*)

Page. O my lady Livia! O my Masters! O gentles all! a party of the enemy is coming to attack the castle, and they'll murder every soul of us.

Vald. Speak plainer, Wretch; what said'st thou?

Page. (*speaking loud in his ear.*) The enemy are coming to attack the castle.

Vald. Thou liest.

Page. I wish I did; but he will confirm my words. (*Pointing to a* Servant *who now enters in alarm.*)

Ser. (*to* Vald.) He speaks truth, my lord; they are approaching in great strength.

Vald. Approaching! are they near us then?

Page. Aye marry! too near. They beat no drum, as you may guess; but the heavy sound of their march strikes from the hollow ground most fearfully. (Valdemere *becoming perfectly sober, stands confounded.*)

Liv. (*and the* Ladies, *much alarmed.*) What shall we do? What will become of us?

Dart. Have courage, Madam; have courage, Ladies; the valiant Valdemere is your defender; you have nothing to fear.

Liv. (*and* Ladies *crowding close to* Vald.) Aye, dear Count; our safety depends on you. Save us! Save us! We have no refuge but you. (*All clamouring at once.*)

Vald. Hush, hush, hush! They'll hear you. (*In a low choked voice.*)

Dart. Nay, don't whisper, Valdemere; they are not so near us yet.

Bar. Rouse ye, Count, and give your orders for the defence of the castle immediately.

Dart. We are ready to execute them, be they ever so daring.

Walt. There is no time to be lost; your orders, Count: do you comprehend us?

Vald. My orders!
Dart. Your orders quickly.
Vald. I am thinking——I was thinking——
Page. (*aside.*) How to save yourself, I believe.
Bar. Well, noble Count, what are your thoughts.
Vald. I—I—I am considering.
Walt. Thought and consideration become a good Commander, with some spice of activity into the bargain.
Dart. There is no time to deliberate; issue your orders immediately. Under such an able commander we may stand a siege of some days,
Vald. A siege!—Aye, the very thing—and so suddenly!
Page. You tremble, my Lord; shall I bring you drops?
Countess. Thou liest, Boy; get thee gone! (*Aside to* Vald.) Are you beside yourself? Tell them what to do; they wait for your orders.
Vald. I order them all to the walls. Haste, haste, (*pushing off the* Ladies *who stand next him.*) and man them as well as you can.
Bar. Woman them, you mean, Valdemere; these are ladies you push.
Countess. Nay; you crowd upon him too much—you confuse him: he is as brave as his sword, if you would leave off confounding him so.
Liv. Dear Valdemere! What is the matter? Rouse yourself, rouse yourself! (*A great alarm without.*) Hear that sound: they are at hand; what shall we do? There is a vault by the side of this grotto, where we poor miserable women may be concealed, but——
Vald. (*eagerly.*) Where is it? My duty is to take care of you, dear Livia: come, come with me, and I'll place you in security. (*Catches hold of the* Page *in his hurry, and runs off with him.*)
Countess. Stop, stop! That is the Page you have got. Will you leave me behind you?
(*As* Vald. *is about to drag the* Page *into a recess at the side of the stage, the* Boy *laughs outright, and he discovers his mistake.*)
Vald. Off, Wretch! Where is Livia; come, come, my Life! where are you? (*Stretching out one hand to her, while his body bends eagerly the other way.*)
Liv. No, Count; I will not go. Alarm overcame me for the moment; but now I will enter the castle; and if the enemy should take it, they shall find me there in a situation becoming its Mistress.
Omnes. Bravely said, lady! Let us all to the castle.
Dart. With or without a commander, we'll defend it to the last extremity.
Countess. (*going to* Vald. *and speaking in his ear, while she pulls him along with her.*) Come with the rest, or be disgraced forever. Did I put a sword by your side, a cockade in your hat, for this? (*A still louder alarm without, and* EXEUNT *in great hurry and confusion.*)

SCENE III.—A GROVE BY THE CASTLE; THE SCENE DARKENED, AND MOVING LIGHTS SEEN THROUGH THE TREES FROM THE CASTLE, SOMETIMES GLEAMING FROM THE BATTLEMENTS, AND SOMETIMES FROM THE WINDOWS.

Enter NINA with a Peasant's surtout over her dress.

Nin. O, if in this disguise I could but enter the castle! Alas! the company are gone in, and the gate is now shut. I'll wait here till daybreak.—Woe is me! He passed by me quickly, and heard me not when I spoke to him.———O mercy! Soldiers coming here! (*Hides herself amongst some bushes.*)

Enter BOUNCE, followed by Soldiers.

Bounce. Come, let us hector it here awhile: I'll warrant ye we make a noise that might do for the siege of Troy.
1st Sold. Aye, you're a book-learned man, Corporal: you're always talking of that there siege. Could they throw a bomb in those days, or fire off an eighteen-pounder any better than ourselves? (*Firing heard without.*)
Bounce. Hark! our Comrades are at it on the other side: let us to it here at the same time. I'll warrant ye we'll make the fair Lady within and my Lady's fair gentlewomen, and the village Cure himself, should he be of the party, cast up their eyes like boiled fish, and say ten pater-nosters in a breath.
(*Voices without.*) Hallo! hallo! Comrades! Who goes there?

Enter 2d SOLDIER and others.

2d Sold. What makes you so quiet, an' be hanged to you! An old woman with her spinning-wheel might be stationed here to as much purpose. I could not tell where to find you.
Bounce. By my faith, 'tis the first time Corporal Bounce was ever accused of not making noise enough. Come; we'll give you a round shall make the whole principality tremble.
(*They prepare to fire, when* 3d Soldier *enters in haste.*)
3d Sold. Hold, there! Spare your powder for better purpose: an advanced corps of the enemy is coming in good earnest, and marching in haste to the castle.
Bounce. So, we're to have real fighting then! Faith, Comrade, valiant as I am, a little sham thunder, and a good supper after it, would have pleased my humour full as well at this present time Pest take it! They must open the gates and let us in. What gentlemen are in the castle? We have no officer to command us.

3d Sold. The Chevalier Dartz is there, and Count Valdemere.

Bounce. Ah! he's but a craven-bird, that same Count: a kind of Free-mason-soldier, for parades and processions, and the like. If the young Baron de Bertrand were there, we should be nobly commanded.

3d Sold. Don't stand prating here; let us give the alarm to the rest of our Comrades, and get into the castle ere the enemy come up with us.

Bounce. Come, then! But what moves amongst the bushes? (*Pulling out* Nina.) A girl, i'faith, disguised in a countryman's surtout.

Nin. O dear—O mercy! Don't be angry with me: I'm a poor harmless creature.

Bounce. Blessings on thee, pretty one! thou'rt harmless enough: don't think we're afraid of thee. Come away with us: we'll lodge thee safely in the castle. [EXEUNT.

ACT V.

SCENE I.—A HALL IN THE CASTLE.

Enter LIVIA and the BARON, talking as they enter.

Liv. Yes, Baron; you and your friends have, by this plot of yours, taught me a severe lesson; and I thank you for it, though my own understanding ought to have made it unnecessary.

Bar. Dear Livia; why should a young woman like you be so much affronted at finding her understanding—for you are mighty fond of that word *understanding*—not quite infallible? At the age of 63, an age I shall henceforth honestly own I have attained, one is not surprised at some small deficiencies even in one's own understanding. One can then, as I shall henceforth do, give up the vanity of being a wise man.

Liv. And a poet, too, Baron? That were too much to give up in one day.

Bar. Posterity will settle that point, Madam, and I shall give myself very little concern about the matter.

Liv. Which one can easily perceive is perfectly indifferent to you. (*Noise without.*) What increased noise is that? Since your poor victim is already sacrificed, (for they tell me he is gone, on pretence of violent illness, to the vaults under the castle,) why continue this mock-war any longer?

Enter SERVANT.

Bar. By this man's looks one might suppose that our mockery had turned to earnest.

Liv. (*to* Serv.) What is the matter:

Serv. A party of the real enemy, Madam, *has* come to attack the castle, and is now fighting with the Chevalier's men at the gate.

Liv. Why did you not open the gate to receive the Chevalier's men?

Serv. They called to us to get in; but we could not distinguish them from the enemy, who were close on their heels; so we let down the portcullis, a'nt please you, and they must fight it out under the walls as they can.

Bar. Is the Chevalier in the castle?

Serv. O lud, no, Sir! he sallied out by the postern with Mr. Walter Baurchel and some of the domestics, and is fighting with them like a devil. But his numbers are so small, we fear he must be beaten; and——

Liv. And how can we hold out with neither men, ammunition, nor provisions. Merciful Heaven deliver us!

Enter MAID-SERVANTS, wringing their hands.

Maids. O lud, lud! What will become of us? What will become of us? What shall we do?

Bar. Any thing you please but stun us with such frantic clamour. Get off to your laundries and your store-rooms, and your dressing closets, and don't increase the confusion here.

[EXEUNT Maids, *clamouring and wringing their hands.*

Liv. You are rough with those poor creatures; they are very much frightened.

Bar. Not half so frightened as those who make less noise. They think it necessary to raise an out-cry, because they are women and it is expected from them. I have been long enough dupéd in this way; I have no patience with it now..–But I must go to the walls, and try to be of use. (*going.*)

(*Voice without.*) Succour! Succour!

Liv. Ha! there is a welcome cry.

Enter JEANETTA.

Succour did they say?

Jean. Yes, my Lady: a band of men come to relieve us; and their leader is charging the enemy so furiously sword in hand!—the Chevalier, they said, fought like a devil; but he fights like forty devils. We have been looking down upon them by torch-light from the walls; and their swords flash, and their plumes nod, and their eyes glare in the light so gallantly, I could almost sally out myself and take a bout with them.

Bar. (*to* Jean.) Aye, Minx; thou'rt forward enough to do any thing.

Liv. Nay, chide her not when she brings us good news.—Heaven be praised for this timely aid! What brave man has brought it to us? Dost thou know him, Jeanetta?

Jean. No, Madam: for, thank God! his back is to us, and his face to the foe; but there is a smack in his air of the Baron de Bertrand.

Bar. Ha! my brave Antonio! I'll be sworn it is he. Come; let us to the ramparts, and look down on the combatants.

Liv. Heaven grant there be not much blood-shed! [EXEUNT.

Scene II.—A dark vault.

Enter Valdemere, followed by Page, carrying a torch in one hand, and his plumed cap in the other.

Vald. (*after hurrying some paces onward, stops short, and looks wildly round him.*) Is there a passage this way?

Page. No, my Lord; but you run marvellously fast for one so ill as you are; I could scarcely keep up with you: pray stop here awhile, and take breath.

Vald. Stop here, and that sound still behind me!

Page. What sound?

Vald. Did'st thou not hear the tread of heavy steps behind us? The trampling of a whole band?

Page. It was but the sound of my feet following you.

Vald. Only that. The castle is taken thou say'st, and the ruffians are in quest of me.

Page. Aye, marry are they! Their savage leader says, as the old tale-book has it, that he'll have the heart's blood of Count Valdemere on his sword before he eat or sleep.

Vald. His sword!

Page. Aye, my Lord, a good heavy rapier I assure you; and he swears, since you have not fought like a man on the walls, he'll kill you like a rat in your hole.

Vald. I am horribly beset!

Page. Aye, hot work, my Lord; the big drops fall from your forehead, like a thunder shower.

Vald. Thou liest; I am cold as the damp of a sepulchre.

Page. And pale too, as the thing that lies within it.

Vald. (*listening.*) Hark, hark! they are coming.

Page. I hear nothing.

Vald. Thou dost! thou dost! lying varlet, with that treacherous leer upon thy face: thou hast decoyed me here for destruction. (*Catching him by the throat.*)

Page. For mercy, my Lord, let go your hold! I hear nothing, as I hope to be saved, but our own voices sounding again from the vaulted roof over our heads.

Vald. Aye, it is vaulted; thou'rt right perhaps.—This strange ringing in my ears will not suffer me to know the sounds that really are, from those are not.—Why dost thou grin so? I have a frenzy I believe; I know I am strangely disordered. It was not so with me yesterday. I could then——Dost thou grin still? Stand some paces off: why art thou always so near me?

Page. (*retiring to the opposite side of the stage.*) I had best, perhaps: his hand has the gripe of a madman.

Vald. (*leans his back against the side-scene, pressing his temples tightly with both hands, and speaking low to himself.*) This horrible tumult of nature! it knows within itself the moments that precede its destruction.

Page. I must let him rest for a time. (*Pause.*)—It is cold here doing nothing. (*Puts on his cap.*)—He moves not: his eyes have a fixed ghastly stare; truly he is ill. (*Going up to him.*) You are very ill, my Lord.

Vald. (*starting.*) Have mercy upon me!

Page. Don't start, my Lord; it was I who spoke to you.

Vald. Who art thou?

Page. Your Page, my Lord.

Vald. Ha! only thou! thy stature seemed gigantic.

Page. This half-yard of plume in my cap, and your good fancy have made it so.

Vald. Aye; thou wert unbonnetted before. Keep by me then, but don't speak to me. (*Putting his hand again to his temples.*)

Page. Nay, I must ask what is the matter. You are very ill: what is the matter with you?

Vald. There is a beating within me like the pendulum of a great clock.

Page. Is it in your heart or your head, my Lord?

Vald. Don't speak to me: it is every where.

Page. Rest here awhile; they will not discover you. You are indeed very ill.—Are you worse?

Vald. Speak not; my mouth is parched like a cinder: I can't answer thee.

Page. I'll fetch you some water. (*Going.*)

Vald. (*springing across the stage after him.*) Not for the universe.

Page. (*aside.*) He's strong enough still I see. (*Turning his ear to the entry of the vault.*)

Vald. Thou'rt listening; thou hear'st something.

Page. By my faith they are coming now.

Vald. Merciful Heaven! where shall I run?

Page. Where you please, my Lord.

Vald. (*hurrying two or three steps on, in a kind of groping way.*) The light fails me: I don't see where I am going.

Page. Nay it burns very clearly; I fear it will discover where we are.

Vald. Put it out! put it out, for God's sake!—Where is it? (*Seizes on the torch, puts it out, stamping on it with his feet, then laying himself on the floor.*) I am gone—I am dead; tell them so, for God's sake!

Page. I shall tell but half a lie when I do.

Enter Baron and Walter Baurchel with Soldiers' cloaks thrown over them, and Livia in the same disguise, with a military cap drawn over her eyes, a Servant preceding them with torches.

Liv. (*shrinking back as she enters.*) Is he dead? (Page *nods, and winks to her significantly.*)

Bar. (*in a rough voice.*) Has the Caitiff escaped my sword? Have I thirsted for his blood in vain?

Walt. (*in a rough voice also.*) Is he really dead? I'll lay my hand on his breast, and feel if his heart beats.

Page. O don't do that, gracious merciful Sir! You'll but defile your worshipful fingers in touching of a dead corse, which brings bad luck with it.

Walt. Well then, Boy, I will not; but there are a couple of brawny knaves without, who are burying the dead for us; they shall come forthwith, and cast him into the pit with the rest.

Page. O lud, no, Sir! don't do that, please your worshipful Goodness! What if he should come alive again?

Walt. Never fear that: I'll draw this rapier cross his laced cravat, and make it secure.

Vald. (*starting up upon his knees.*) Mercy, mercy! slay not a dying man; let me breathe my last breath without violence.

Liv. (*covering her eyes, and turning away her head.*) Torment him no more, I beseech you!

Enter ANTONIO, and DARTZ with his arm bound up.

Ant. Nay, Gentlemen, this is unfeeling, ungenerous, unmanly. Stand upon your feet, Count Valdemere, (*raising him up.*) there are none but friends near you, if friends they may be called, who have played you such an abominable trick.

Vald. How is this? Art thou Antonio? Where are those who would have butcher'd me?

Omnes, Liv. and *Ant. excepted.* Ha, ha, ha! (*laughing some time.*)

Bar. Nowhere, Valdemere, but in your own imagination. We have put this deceit upon you to cure you of arrogance and boasting.

Walt. Running the usual risk, gentle Count, of not having our services very thankfully acknowledged.

Vald. You have laid a diabolical snare for me, and I have fallen into it most wretchedly.—I have been strangely overcome. I have been moved as with magic.—I have been—— I—I know not—What shall I call it?

Walt. Give yourself no trouble about that, Count; we can find a name for it.

Ant. Nay, good Sir; you shall not call it by any name a man would be asham——(*correcting himself*) unwilling to hear. The Count, as Dartz has informed me, while I bound up his wound above stairs, has been tampered with, by dreams and fortune-telling and other devices, in a way that might have overcome many a man, who, differently circumstanced, would not have shrunk from his duty in the field. And shall we sport wantonly with a weakness of our nature in some degree common to all? We admire a brave man for overcoming it, and should pity the less brave when it overcomes him.

Liv. (*catching his hand eagerly.*) Noble Antonio!

Ant. Young man, I thank you: this squeeze of the hand tells me I have you upon my side.

Vald. And let me also say, "Noble Antonio!"—And what more can I say! I have not deserved this generous treatment from you.

Ant. Say nothing more: the transactions of this night shall be as if they had never been: they will never be mentioned by any of us.

Walt. Speak for yourself Antonio De Bertrand; my tongue is a free agent, and will not be bridled by another person's feelings. But there is one condition on which I consent to be silent as the grave; and the Baron and Chevalier concur with me.

(Bar. *and* Dartz.) We do so.

[EXIT Bar.

Dart. We but require of Valdemere to do what, as a man of honour he is bound to do; and satisfied on this point, our silence is secured for ever.

(Re-enter Bar, leading in NINA.)

Bar. (*to* Vald.) Look on this fair gentlewoman: her father was a respectable officer, though misfortunes prevented his promotion. You have taken advantage of her situation, being under the protection of the Countess your mother, as a God-daughter and distant relation, to use her most unworthily. Make her your wife, and receive, as her dowry, your reputation in the world untarnished.

Walt. Now, good, heroic, sentimental Antonio; is this too much to require of the noble personage you plead for?

Ant. On this I am compelled to be silent.

Bar. Will Count Valdemere vouchsafe us an answer? Will you marry her or not, Count?

Vald. I have indeed—I ought in strict justice———She will not accept of one who has used her so unworthily.

Page. (*eagerly.*) I hope not: I would rather than a thousand crowns she would refuse him.

Dart. Will you have him or not, pretty Nina? Don't be afraid to refuse him: we shan't think the worse of you if you do. (Nina *stands silent and weeping.*)

Page. (*aside to* Nina.) Don't have him, Woman; he's a coward and a coxcomb, and a——don't have him.

Nina. (*aside.*) Ah, you have never loved him as I have done, Brother.

Page. (*aloud.*) Murrain take thee and thy love too! thou hast no more spirit in thee than a worm.

Bar. Bravo, Boy! thou hast enough of it, I see; and I'll put a stand of colours in thy hand as soon as thou art strong enough to carry them. Thou art my boy now; I will protect thee.

Page. I thank you, Baron.—And my sister; will you protect her too?

Bar. Yes, child; both of you.

Page. Refuse him then Nina: hast thou no more pride about thee?

Nina. Alas! I should have more pride: I know I should; but I have been sadly humbled.

Page. Thou'lt be still more so if thou art his wife, trust me! for he'll despise thee, and cow thee, and make thee a poor slave to his will. Thou'lt tremble at every glance of his eye, and every turn of his humoursome fancy.—He'll treat thee like a very——

Vald. Stop, spiteful Wretch! I'll cherish and protect her, and turn every word thou hast uttered to a manifest and abominable falsehood.—Give me thy hand, Nina; thou really lovest me; no one will do it but thee; and I shall have need of somebody to love me.

Omnes. Well said, Count! this is done like a man!

Ant. (*to* Page.) Faith, Boy! those sharp words of thine were worth a store of gentle persuasion. Thou hast woo'd for thy sister in a spell-like fashion, as witches say their prayers backwards. I wish somebody would court my mistress for me in the same manner: 'tis the only chance I have of winning her.

Liv. (*in a feigned voice.*) I'll do that for thee, gallant De Bertrand; for I know faults enough of yours to acquaint her with, besides the greatest of all faults, concealing good talents *under a bushel;* every tittle of which I will tell her forthwith, and she'll marry you, no doubt, out of spite.

Ant. Thanks, pleasant Stripling! May thy success be equal to thy zeal! (*Taking her hand.*) Thy name, youth: thou hast a pretty gait in that warlike cloak of thine, but thy cap over-shadows thee perversely.—Ha! this is not a boy's hand!—That ring—O Heavens!

(*Retires some paces back in confusion, while* Livia, *taking off her cap and cloak, makes him a profound curtesy; and pauses, expecting him to speak. Finding him silent, she begins to rub her hand, and look at it affectedly.*)

Liv. It is not a boy's hand, Baron de Bertrand: 'tis the hand of a weak foolish woman, which shall be given to a lover of her's who is not much wiser than herself, whenever he has courage to ask it.

Walt. (*aside, jogging* Ant.) That is thyself: dost thou not apprehend her, Man?

Liv. (*still looking at her hand.*) Even so; whenever he has courage to ask it. That, I suppose, may happen in about five or six years from this present time.

Ant. (*running up to her, catching her hand, and putting his knee to the ground,*) Now, now, dear Livia! O that I could utter what I feel!—I am a fool still;—I cannot.

Liv. Nothing you can possibly say will make me more sensible of your generous worth, or more ashamed of my former injustice to it.

(*All crowd round* Ant. *and* Liv. *to congratulate them, when the* Countess *is heard speaking angrily without.*)

Dart. We must pay our compliments another time; I fear there is a storm ready to burst upon us.

Enter Countess.

Countess. Yes, Gentlemen; I have heard of your plot, as you call it; a diabolical conspiracy for debasing the merit you envy. I despise you all: you are beneath my anger.

Walt. Let us escape it then.

Countess. (*to* Walt.) Aye, snarling Cynic! who hast always a prick of thy adder's tongue to bestow upon every one whom the world admires or caresses; thou art the wicked mover of all these contrivances. (*To the* Bar.) As for you, poor antiquated *Rhime-maker!* had I but continued to praise your verses, you would have suffered me to ruin your whole kindred very quietly; nor had one single grain of compunction disturbed the sweet calm of your gratified vanity.

Bar. Nay, Madam; I cannot charge my memory with any interruption of your goodness, in this respect, to my face: had you been as perseveringly obliging behind my back, we might indeed have remained longer friends than would have been entirely for the interests of my heir.

Countess. Well, well; may every urchin of the principality learn by rote some scrap of your poetry, and mouth it at you as often as you stir abroad! (*To* Liv.) And you, Madam; you are here, too, amongst this worshipful divan! This is your hospitality—your delicacy—your———O! may you wed a tyrant for your pains, and these walls prove your odious prison!—But I spend my words vainly: where is the unhappy victim of your envious malevolence? They told me he was here. (*Discovering* Vald. *and* Nina *retired to the bottom of the stage.*) Ha! you *are* here, patiently enduring their triumph, degenerate Boy! Is this the fruit of all my cares? Did I procure for you a military appointment, did I tease every creature connected with me for your promotion, did I ruin myself for your extravagant martial equipments—and has it all come to this?

Vald. You put me into the army, Madam, to please your own vanity; and they who thrust their sons into it for that purpose, are not always gratified.

Countess. And you answer me thus! I have spoilt you, indeed; and an indulged child, I find, does not always prove a dutiful one. Who is that you hold by the hand?

Vald. My wife, Madam.

Countess. Your wife! You do not say so: you dare not say so. Have they imposed a wife upon you also? Let go her unworthy hand.

Vald. No, Madam; never. It is my hand that is unworthy to hold so much innocent affection.

Countess. You are distracted: let go her hand, or I renounce you for ever.—What, will you not?

Vald. I will not.

Countess. Thou can'st be sturdy, I find, only for thine own ruin. They have confounded and bewildered thee: thou hast joined the conspiracy against thyself, and thy poor mother.—O, I could hate thee more than them all!—Heaven grant me patience!

Walt. I like to hear people pray for what they really want.

Countess. Insolent! Heaven grant you what you need not pray for, the detestation of every one annoyed with your pestiferous society. [Exit *in rage.*

Dart. Let us be thankful this tornado is over, and the hurry of an eventful day and night so happily concluded.—I hope, charming Livia, you forgive our deceit, and regret not its consequences.

Liv. The only thing to be regretted, Chevalier, is the wound you have received.

Dart. Thank God! this, though but slight, is the only harm that has been done to-night, a broken pate or two excepted; and our feigned attack upon the castle has been providentially the means of defending it from a real one. Had not Antonio, however, who was not in our plot, come so opportunely to our aid, we had been beaten.—But now that I have time to inquire, how did'st thou come so opportunely?

Ant. I have been in the habit of wandering after dark round the walls. Livia knows not how many nights I have watched the light gleaming from the window of her chamber. Wandering then, as usual, I discovered a corps of the enemy on their march to the castle, and went immediately for succour, which I fortunately found. We have both fought stoutly, my Friend, with our little force; but the blows have fallen to your share, and the blessing to mine.

Dart. Not so; friends keep not their shares so distinctly.

Liv. True, Chevalier; and you claim, besides, whatever satisfaction you may have from the gratitude of this good company, for contriving a plot that has ended so fortunately.

Dart. Nay, there is, I fear, one person in this good company, from whom my claims, of this kind, are but small.—Count Valdemere, can you forgive me?

Vald. Ask me not at present, Dartz. I know that my conduct to Antonio did deserve correction; but you have taken a revenge for him with merciless severity, which he would himself have been too generous, too noble to have taken.

Dart. Well Count, I confess I stand somewhat reproved and conscience-stricken before you.

Walt. (*to* Dart.) Why, truly, if he forgive thee, or any of us, by this day twelve-month, it will be as much as we can reasonably expect.

Dart. Be it so! And now we have all pardon to ask, where, I hope, it will be granted immediately. (*Bowing to the audience.*)

THE BEACON: A MUSICAL DRAMA.

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

MEN.

ULRICK, *Lord of the Island.*
ERMINGARD.
BASTIANI, *Friend of* Ulrick.
GARCIO, *Friend of* Ermingard.
Page.
Pope's Legate.
Knights of St. John of Jerusalem.
Fishermen, Singers, Attendants of the Legate, &c.

WOMEN.

AURORA.
TERENTIA, *a noble Lady and Governante to* Aurora.
VIOLA, } *Ladies attending on* Aurora.
EDDA. }
SCENE, *a small Island of the Mediterranean.*
Time, *towards the middle of the 14th Century.*

ACT I.

SCENE I.—A GROVE ADJOINING TO A CASTELLATED BUILDING, PART OF WHICH ONLY IS SEEN.

Several People are discovered near the Window of one of its Towers, who begin to sing as the Curtain draws up.

SONG *of several voices.*

Up! quit thy bower, late wears the hour;
Long have the rooks caw'd round thy tower;
On flower and tree, loud hums the bee;
The wilding kid sports merrily;
A day so bright, so fresh, so clear,
Shineth when good fortune's near.

Up! Lady fair, and braid thy hair,
And rouze thee in the breezy air;
The lulling stream, that sooth'd thy dream,
Is dancing in the sunny beam;
And hours so sweet, so bright, so gay,
Will waft good fortune on its way.

Up! time will tell; the friar's bell
Its service-sound hath chimed well;
The aged crone keeps house alone,
And reapers to the fields are gone;
The active day so boon and bright,
May bring good fortune ere the night.

Enter Page.

Page. Leave off your morning songs, they come too late;
My lady hath been up these two good hours,
And hath no heart to listen to your lays;
You should have cheer'd her sooner.

1st. Sing. Her nightly vigils make the ev'ning morn,
And thus we reckon'd time.

Page. Well, go ye now;
Another day she'll hear your carols out.

[EXEUNT Page *and* Singers *severally, by the bottom of the stage, while* ULRICK *and* TERENTIA *enter by the front, speaking as they enter.*

Ul. Thou plead'st in vain: this night shall be the last.

Ter. Have patience, noble Ulrick; be assur'd,
Hope, lacking nourishment, if left alone,
Comes to a natural end. Then let Aurora,
Night after night, upon the lofty cliff,
Her beacon watch: despondency, ere long,
Will steal upon the sad unvaried task.

Ul. Sad and unvaried! Aye; to sober minds
So doth it seem indeed. I've seen a child,
Day after day, to his dead hedgeling bring
The wonted mess, prepar'd against its waking,
'Till from its putrid breast each feather dropt:
Or on the edge of a clear stream hold out
His rod and baitless line from morn till noon,
Eyeing the spotted trout, that past his snare
A thousand times hath glided, till by force
His angry Dame hath dragg'd him from his station.
Hope is of such a tough continuous nature,
That, waiting thus its natural end, my life
Shall to an end wear sadly. Patience, say'st thou?
I have too long been patient.

Ter. Then, be it known to thee, despondency
Already steals upon her; for she sits not
So oft' as she was wont upon the beach,
But in her chamber keeps in sombre silence;
And when the night is come, less eagerly
She now inquires if yet the beacon's light
Peer down the woody pass, that to the cliff
Nightly conducts her toilsome steps. I guess
Soon of her own accord, she'll watch no more.

Ul. No, thou unwisely guessest. By that flame
I do believe some spirit of the night
Comes to her mystic call, and soothes her ear
With whisper'd prophecies of good to come.

Ter. In truth, my Lord, you do yourself talk strangely;
These are wild thoughts.

Ul. Nay, be thou well assur'd,
Spell-bound she is: night hath become her day:

On all wild songs, and sounds, and ominous things,
(Shunning the sober intercourse of friends
Such as affliction courts,) her ear and fancy
Do solely dwell. This visionary state
Is foster'd by these nightly watchings; therefore,
I say again, I will no more endure it;
This night shall be the last.

Ter. That Ermingard upon the plains of Palestine
Fell on that fatal day, what sober mind
Can truly doubt; altho' his corpse, defaced,
[illegible] was ne'er discover'd.
For, well I am assur'd had he survived it,
Knowing thou wer't his rival, and Aurora
Left in this isle, where thou bear'st sov'reign sway,
He, with a lover's speed, had hasten'd back.
All, whom the havoc of the battle spared,
Have to their homes return'd.——Thou shak'st thy head,
Thou dost not doubt?

Ul. We'll speak of this no more.
I'm sick and weary of these calculations.
We must and will consider him as dead;
And let Aurora know——

Enter Bastiani.

(*To* Bast. *angrily*) Why, Bastiani,
Intrud'st thou thus regardless of my state:
These petty cares are grown most irksome to me;
I cannot hear thee now.

Bast. Indeed, my Lord, it is no petty care
Compels me to intrude. Within your port
A vessel from the holy land has moor'd.

Ul. (*starting.*) Warriors from Palestine?

Bast. No, good my Lord!
The holy legate on his way to Rome;
Who, by late tempests driven on our coasts,
Means here his shatter'd pinnace to refit,
And give refreshment to his weary train.

Ul. In evil hour he comes to lord it here.

Bast. He doth appear a meek and peaceful man.

Ul. 'Tis seeming all. I would with mailed foes
Far rather in th' embattled plain contend
Than strive with such my peaceful town within.
Already landed say'st thou?

Bast. Yes, from the beach their grave procession comes.
Between our gazing sight and the bright deep,
That glows behind them in the western sun,
Crosses and spears and croziers shew aloft
Their darken'd spikes, in most distinct confusion;
While grey-cowl'd monks, and purple-stoled priests,
And crested chiefs a closing group below
Motley and garish, yet right solemn too,
Move slowly on.——

Ul. Then must I haste to meet them.

Bast. Or be most strangely wanting in respect.
For every street and alley of your city,
Its eager swarm pours forth to gaze upon them.
The very sick and dying, whose wan cheeks
No more did think to meet the breath of heaven,
Creep to their doors, and stretch their wither'd arms
To catch a benediction. Blushing maids,
Made bold by inward sense of sanctity,
Come forth with threaded roseries in their hands
To have them by the holy prelate bless'd;
And mothers hold their wond'ring infants up,
That touch of passing cowl or sacred robe
May bring them good.—And in fair truth, my Lord,
Amongst the crowd the rev'rend legate seems
Like a right noble and right gentle parent
Cheering a helpless race.

Ul. Aye, 'tis right plain thou art besotted too.
Were he less gentle, I should fear him less.
[Exit.

Bast. He's in a blessed mood: what so disturbs him?

Ter. What has disturb'd him long, as well thou knowest:
Aurora's persevering fond belief,
That her beloved Ermingard still lives
And will return again. To guide his bark
Upon our dang'rous coast she nightly kindles
Her watch-fire, sitting by the lonely flame;
For so she promised, when he parted from her,
To watch for his return.

Bast. Ulrick in wisdom should have married them
Before he went, for then the chance had been
She had not watch'd so long.——
Your widow is a thing of more docility
Than your lorn maiden.—Pardon, fair Terentia.

Ter. Thy tongue wags freely.—Yet, I must confess,
Had Ulrick done what thou call'st wisely, he
The very thing had done which as her kinsman
He was in duty bound to.—But alas!
A wayward passion warp'd him from the right,
And made him use his power ungen'rously
Their union to prevent.

Bast. But tho' the death of Ermingard were proved,
Think'st thou Aurora would bestow her hand
On one who has so long her wishes cross'd;
A lover cloth'd in stern authority?

Ter. I know not; Ulrick fondly so believes;
And I, altho' allied to him by blood,
The play-mate also of his early days,
Dare not an opposite opinion utter.

Bast. Hark there! I hear without th' approaching crowd.
My duty on this public ceremony
I must attend, for honour of the state.
In petty courts like this, on such occasions,

One spangled doublet more or less bears count. [EXEUNT *severally*.

SCENE II.—AN ARBOUR SUPPORTED BY RUSTIC WOODEN PILLARS, TWINED ROUND WITH FLOWERS AND GREEN PLANTS, AND A FLOWER GARDEN SEEN IN THE BACK GROUND BETWEEN THE PILLARS.

Enter PAGE, followed by EDDA, speaking as she enters.

Ed. Yes, do so, Boy; Aurora is at hand.—
But take with thee, besides, this little basket,
And gather roses in the farther thicket,
Close to the garden gate.——

Page. (*taking the basket.*) Give it me then.
She chid me yesterday
For gath'ring full-spread roses, whose loose leaves
Fell on her lap: to-day I'll fill my basket
With buds, and budlings, and half-open'd flowers,
Such as nice dames do in their kerchiefs place.

Ed. Prate less and move thee quicker. Get thee hence.
See there thy mistress comes: haste to thy task. [EXIT Page.

Enter AURORA and TERENTIA.

Ter. Here you will find a more refreshing air;
The western sun beats fiercely.

Aur. Western sun!
Is time so far advanced? I left my couch
Scarcely an hour ago.

Ter. You are deceived.
Three hours have past, but past by you unheeded;
Who have the while in silent stillness sat,
Like one forlorn, that has no need of time.

Aur. In truth I now but little have to do
With time or any thing besides. It passes;
Hour follows hour; day follows day; and year,
If I so long shall last, will follow year:
Like drops that thro' the cavern'd hermit's roof
Some cold spring filters; glancing on his eye
At measured intervals, but moving not
His fix'd unvaried notice.

Ed. Nay, dearest lady, be not so depress'd.
You have not ask'd me for my song to day—
The song you prais'd so much. Shall I not sing it?
I do but wait your bidding.

Aur. I thank thy kindness; sing it if thou wilt.

(*Sits down on a low seat, her head supported between both her hands, with her elbows resting on her knees.*)

SONG.

Where distant billows meet the sky,
A pale dull light the seamen spy,
As spent they stand and tempest-tost,
Their vessel struck, their rudder lost;
While distant homes where kinsmen weep,
And graves full many a fathom deep,
By turns their fitful, gloomy thoughts pourtray:
" 'Tis some delusion of the sight,
Some northern streamer's paly light."
" Fools!" saith rous'd Hope with gen'rous scorn,
" It is the blessed peep of morn,
And aid and safety come when comes the day."
And so it is; the gradual shine
Spreads o'er heaven's verge its lengthen'd line:
Cloud after cloud begins to glow
And tint the changeful deep below;
Now sombre red, now amber bright,
Till upward breaks the blazing light;
Like floating fire the gleamy billows burn:
Far distant on the ruddy tide,
A black'ning sail is seen to glide;
Loud bursts their eager joyful cry,
Their hoisted signal waves on high,
And life and strength and happy thoughts return.

Ter. Is not her voice improved in power and sweetness?

Ed. It is a cheering song.

Aur. It cheers those who are cheer'd.
(*After a pause.*)
Twelve years are past;
Their daughters matrons grown, their infants youths,
And they themselves with aged furrows mark'd;
But none of all their kin are yet return'd,
No, nor shall ever

Ter. Still run thy thoughts upon those hapless women
Of that small hamlet, whose advent'rous peasants
To Palestine with noble Baldwin went,
And ne'er were heard of more?

Aur. They perish'd there; and of their dismal fate
No trace remain'd—none of them all return'd.
Did'st thou not say so?—Husbands, lovers, friends,—
Not one return'd again.

Ter. So I believe.———

Aur. Thou but believest then?

Ter. As I was told———

Ed. Thou hast the story wrong.
Four years gone by, one did return again;
But marr'd and maim'd and changed,—a woful man.

Aur. And what tho' every limb were hack'd and maim'd,
And roughen'd o'er with scars?—he did return. (*Rising lightly from her seat.*)
I would a pilgrimage to Iceland go,
To the Antipodes or burning zone,
To see that man who did return again,
And her, who did receive him.—Did receive him!
O what a moving thought lurks here!—How was't?
Tell it me all: and oh, another time,
Give me your tale ungarbled.—

Enter VIOLA.

Ha Viola! 'tis my first sight of thee
Since our long vigil. Thou hast had, I hope,

A sound and kindly sleep.——

Viol. Kindly enough, but somewhat cross'd with dreams.

Aur. How cross'd? What was thy dream? O tell it me!
I have an ear that craves for every thing
That hath the smallest sign or omen in it.
It was not sad?

Voil. Nay, rather strange; Methought
A christ'ning feast within your bower was held;
But when the infant to the font was brought,
It proved a full-grown man, in armour clad.

Aur. A full-grown man! (*considering for a moment, and then holding up her hands.*)
O blessing on my dream!
From death to life restor'd is joyful birth.
It is, it is! Come to my heart, sweet Maid! (*Embracing* Viola.)
A blessing on thyself and on thy sleep!
I feel a kindling life within me stir,
That doth assure me it has shadow'd forth
A joy that soon shall be.

Ter. So may it prove!
But trust not such vain fancies, nor appear
Too much elated; for unhappy Ulrick
Swears that your Beacon, after this night's watch,
Shall burn no more.

Aur. He does! Then will we have
A noble fire. This night our lofty blaze
Shall thro' the darkness shoot full many a league
Its streamy rays, like to a bearded star
Preceding changeful—aye, and better times.
It may in very truth.—O if his bark
(For many a bark within its widen'd reach
The dark seas traverse) should its light descry!
Should this be so—it may; perhaps it will.
O that it might!—We'll have a rousing blaze!
Give me your hands. (*Taking* Viola *and* Terentia *gaily by the hands.*)
So lightly bounds my heart,
I could like midnight goblins round the flame
Unruly orgies hold.———Ha! think ye not,
When to the font our mail-clad infant comes,
Ulrick will a right gracious gossip prove?
Nay, nay, Terentia, look not so demure,
I needs must laugh.——————

Ter. Indeed you let your fancy wildly run;
And disappointment will the sharper be.

Aur. Talk not of disappointment: be assur'd
Some late intelligence doth Ulrick prompt
To these stern orders. On our sea there sails,
Or soon will sail, some vessels which right gladly
He would permit to founder on the coast,
Or miss its course. But no; it will not be:
In spite of all his hatred, to the shore,
Thro' seas as dark as subterraneous night
It will arrive in safety.

Ter. Nay, sweet Aurora, feed not thus thy wishes
With wild unlikely thoughts; for Ulrick surely
No such intelligence hath had, and thou
But mak'st thy after-sorrow more acute
When these vain fancies fail.

Aur. And let them fail! Tho' duller thoughts succeed,
The bliss e'en of a moment, still is bliss.

Viol. (*to* Ter.) Thou would'st not of her dew-drops spoil the thorn
Because her glory will not last till noon;
Nor still the lightsome gambols of the colt,
Whose neck to-morrow's yoke will gall. Fye on't!
If this be wise, 'tis cruel.——

Aur. Thanks, gentle Viola! Thou art ever kind.
We'll think to-morrow still hath good in store
And make of this a blessing for to-day,
Tho' good Terentia there may chide us for it.

Ter. And thus, a profitable life you'll lead,
Which hath no present time, but is made up
Entirely of to-morrows.

Aur. Well, taunt me as thou wilt, I'll worship still
The blessed morrow, store-house of all good
For wretched folks. They who lament to-day,
May then rejoice: They who in misery bend
E'en to the earth, be then in honour robed.
O! who shall reckon what its brighten'd hours
May of returning joy contain? To-morrow!
The blest to-morrow! Cheering, kind to-morrow!
I were a heathen not to worship thee.
(*To* Ter.) Frown not again; we must not wrangle now.

Ter. Thou dost such vain and foolish fancies cherish;
Thou forcest me to seem unkind and stern.

Aur. Ah! be not stern. Edda will sing the song
That makes feet beat and heads nod to its tune;
And even grave Terentia will be moved
To think of pleasant things.

SONG.

Wish'd-for gales the light vane veering,
Better dreams the dull night cheering;
Lighter heart the morning greeting.
Things of better omen meeting;
Eyes each passing stranger watching,
Ears each feeble rumour catching,
Say he existeth still on earthly ground,
The absent will return, the long, long lost be found.

In the tower the ward-bell ringing,
In the court the carols singing;
Busy hands the gay board dressing,
Eager steps the threshold pressing,
Open'd arms in haste advancing,
Joyful looks thro' blind tears glancing;
The gladsome bounding of his aged hound,
Say he in truth is here, our long, long lost is found.

Hymned thanks and beedmen praying,
With sheath'd sword the urchin playing;

Blazon'd hall with torches burning,
Cheerful morn in peace returning;
Converse sweet that strangely borrows
Present bliss from former sorrows,
O who can tell each blessed sight and sound,
That says, he with us bides, our long, long lost is found.

Aur. (*who at first nods her head lightly to the measure, now bursts into tears, taking* Edda's *hands between hers and pressing them gratefully.*)
I thank thee; this shall be our daily song.
It cheers my heart, altho' these foolish tears
Seem to disgrace its sweetness.

Enter Page.

Viol. (*to* Aur.) Here comes your Page with lightly bounding steps
As if he brought good tidings.
Ed. Grant he may!
Aur. (*eagerly.*) What brings thee hither, Boy?
Page. (*to* Aur.) A noble stranger of the Legate's train,
Come from the holy land, doth wait without,
Near to the garden gate, where I have left him,
He begs to be admitted to your presence;
Pleading for such indulgence as the friend
Of Ermingard; for so he bade me say.
Aur. The friend of Ermingard! The holy land!
(*Pausing for a moment, and then tossing up her arms in ecstasy.*)
O God! It is himself!
(*Runs eagerly some steps towards the garden, then catching hold of* Terentia, *who follows her.*)
My head is dizzy grown; I cannot go.
Haste, lead him hither, Boy.
(*Waving her hand impatiently.*)
Fly; hear'st thou not? [Exit Page.
Ter. Be not so greatly mov'd. It is not likely
This should be Ermingard. The boy has seen him,
And would have known him. 'Tis belike some friend.
Aur. No; every thrilling fibre of my frame
Cries out "It is himself." (*Looking out.*)
He comes not yet; how strange! how dull! how tardy!
Ter. Your Page hath scarce had time to reach the gate,
Tho' he hath run right quickly.
Aur. (*pausing and looking out.*) He comes not yet. Ah! if it be not he,
My sinking heart misgives me.
O now he comes! the size and air are his.
Ter. Not to my fancy: there is no resemblance.
Aur. Nay but there is. And see, he wears his cloak
As he was wont to do; and o'er his cap
The shading plume so hangs—It is! It

Enter Garcio, and she breaking from Terentia, runs towards him.

My lost, my found, my blest! conceal thee not.
(*Going to catch him in her arms, when* Garcio *takes off his plumed cap and bows profoundly; she utters a faint cry, and shrinks back.*)
Gar. Lady, I see this doff'd cap hath discover'd
A scarce less welcome than the one you look'd for.
Pardon a stranger's presence; I've presumed
Thus to intrude, as friend of Ermingard,
Who bade me——
Aur. Bade thee! is he then at hand?
Gar. Ah, would he were!
'Twas in a hostile and a distant land,
He did commit to me these precious tokens,
Desiring me to give them to Aurora,
And with them too, his sad and last farewell.
Aur. And he is dead!
Gar. Nay, wring not thus your hands:
He was alive and well when he intrusted me
With what I now return.
(*Offering her a small casket.*)
Aur. Alive and well, and sends me back my tokens!
Gar. He sent them back to thee as Ulrick's wife;
For such, forc'd by intelligence from hence
Of strong authority, he did believe thee:
And in that fatal fight, which shortly follow'd,
He fought for death as shrewdly as for fame.
Fame he indeed hath earn'd.
Aur. But not the other?
Ah do not say he has! Amongst the slain!
His body was not found.
Gar. As we have learnt, the Knights of blest St. John
Did from the field of dying and of wounded
Many convey, who in their house of charity
All care and solace had; but with the names,
Recorded as within their walls receiv'd,
His is not found; therefore we must account him
With those, who, shrouded in an unknown fate,
Are as the dead lamented, as the dead,
Forever from our worldly care dismiss'd.
Aur. Lamented he shall be; but from my care
Dismiss'd as are the dead—that is impossible.
Ter. Nay, listen to advice so wise and needful:
It is the friend of Ermingard who says,
Let him within thy mind be as the dead.
Aur. My heart repels the thought: it cannot be.
No; till his corse bereft of life is found;
Till this is sworn, and prov'd, and witness'd to me,
Within my breast he shall be living still.
Ter. Wilt thou yet vainly watch night after night,

To guide his bark who never will return?
Aur. Who never will return! And thinkest thou
To bear me down with such presumptuous words?
Heaven makes me strong against thee.
There is a Power above, that calms the storm;
Restrains the mighty; gives the dead to life:—
I will in humble faith my watch still keep;
Force only shall restrain me.
Gar. Force never shall, thou noble, ardent Spirit!
Thy gen'rous confidence would almost tempt me
To think it will be justified.
Aur. Ha! say'st thou so? A blessing rest upon thee
For these most cheering words! Some guardian power
Whispers within thee.——No; we'll not despair.

Enter ULRICK.

Ul. (*to* Gar.) Your dismal mission is, I trust fulfill'd;
Then, gentle Garcio, deem it not unkind
That I entreat you to retire; for they
Who sorrow for the dead, love to be left
To grieve without constraint.
Aur. Thanks for your kind concern, most noble Sir:
And, when we needs must sorrow for the dead,
We'll freely grieve without constraint. But know
Until our corse is found, we ring no knell.
If then your ear for funeral dirges long,
Go to some other bower; hope still is here.
Ul. Ha! still perversely bent! what can convince thee?
This is distraction.
Aur. Be it what it may,
It owns not thy authority. Brave Youth, (*to* Gar.)
I owe thy gentleness some kind acknowledgment.
I'll find another time to give thee thanks.
[EXIT, *followed by* Viol *and* Ed.
Ul. Such hope is madness; yield we to her humour?
No; she must be to sober reason brought
By steady, firm controul.
Gar. Mean you by this, my Lord, a forc'd controul?
Ul. Who shall inquire my meaning?
Gar. The holy Legate, patron of th' oppress'd,
Will venture to inquire.
Ul. Aye, as his nephew, thou presumest, I see.
But know, bold Youth, I am unused to threats.
Gar. Yet brook them as you may. I take my leave. [EXIT.
Manent Ulrick *and* Terentia.

Ul. Did I not say these cursed meddling priests—
These men of meekness, wheresoe'er they come
Would rule and power usurp? Woe worth, the hour
That brought them here!—And for this headstrong maniac
As such, I will——
Ter. Hush, hush! these precincts quit.
It is not well, here to expose to view
Thy weak ungovern'd passions. Thou'rt observed;
Retire with me, where skreen'd from every eye,
With more possession of thy ruffled mind,
Thou may'st consider of thy wayward state.
[EXEUNT.

ACT II.

SCENE I.—A FLAT SPOT OF GROUND ON THE TOP OF A CLIFF, WITH BROKEN CRAGGY ROCKS ON EACH SIDE, AND A LARGE MASS OF ROCK IN THE MIDDLE, ON WHICH A GREAT FIRE OF WOOD IS BURNING; A DARK SEA IN THE BACK GROUND: THE SCENE TO RECEIVE NO LIGHT BUT FROM THE FIRE.

Two FISHERMEN are discovered watching the fire, and supplying it with wood.

SONG.

First Fisherman.

"High is the tower, and the watch-dogs bay,
And the flitting owlets shriek;
I see thee wave thy mantle grey,
But I cannot hear thee speak.

"O, are they from the east or west
The tidings he bears to me?
Or from the land that I love best,
From the knight of the north countree?"

Swift down the winding stair she rush'd,
Like a gust of the summer wind;
Her steps were light, her breath was hush'd,
And she dared not look behind.

She past by stealth the narrow door,
The postern way also,
And thought each bush her robe that tore,
The grasp of a warding foe.

And she has climb'd the moat so steep,
With chilly dread and fear,
While th' evening fly humm'd dull and deep,
Like a wardman whisp'ring near.

"Now, who art thou, thou Palmer tall,
Who beckonest so to me?
Art thou from that dear and distant hall?
Art thou from the north countree?"

He rais'd his hood with wary wile,
  That cover'd his raven hair,
And a manlier face and a sweeter smile
  Ne'er greeted lady fair.

"My coal-black steed feeds in the brake,
  Of gen'rous blood and true;
He'il soon the nearest frontier make,
  Let they who list pursue.

"Thy pale cheek shows an alter'd mind,
  Thine eye the blinding tear;
Come not with me if aught behind
  Is to thy heart more dear.

"Thy fire and dame are in that hall
  Thy friend, thy mother's son;
Come not with me, if one o'them all
  E'er loved thee as I have done."

The lady mounted the coal-black steed,
  Behind her knight I ween,
And they have pass'd thro' brake and mead,
  And plain, and woodland green.

But hark, behind! the warders shout,
  And the hasty larums ring;
And the mingled sound of a gath'ring rout
  The passing air doth bring.

"O noble steed! now 'quit thee well,
  And prove thy gen'rous kind!
That fearful sound doth louder swell,
  It is not far behind.

"The frontier's near—a span the plain,
  Press on and do not fail!
Ah! on our steps fell horsemen again,
  I hear their ringing mail."

2d Fish. Tush, man! give o'er; thy ballads have no end,
When thou art in the mood. I hear below
A sound of many voices on the shore:
Some boat, belike, forced by the drifting current
Upon the rocks, may be in jeopardy.

1st Fish. 'Tis all a mock to cut my ditty short.
Thou hast no mind to hear how it befel
That those two lovers were by kinsman stern
O'erta'en; and how the knight, by armed foes
Beset, a bloody combat bravely held,
And was the while robb'd of his lady fair,
And how in Paynim land they met again.
How, as a Page, disguised, she sought her knight,
Left on the field as lifeless. How she cheer'd him;
And how they married were, and home in state——

2d Fish. Ha' done, ha' done! a hundred times I've heard it.
My Grandam lull'd me with it on her lap
Full many a night; and as my father sat,
Mending his nets upon the beach, he sung it.
I would I knew my prayers as well.—But hark!
I hear a noise again.——

(*Goes to the bottom of the stage, as if he were looking down to the sea.*)
Along the shore
I see lights moving swiftly.

1st Fish. Some fishermen, who, later than the rest,
Their crazy boat bring in; while, to the beach,
With flaming brands, their wives and children run.
Rare sight, indeed, to take thy fancy so!

(*Sings again.*)

No fish stir in our heaving net,
And the sky is dark, and the night is wet;
And we must ply the lusty oar,
For the tide is ebbing from the shore;
And sad are they whose faggots burn,
So kindly stored for our return.

Our boat is small and the tempest raves,
And nought is heard but the lashing waves,
And the sullen roar of the angry sea,
And the wild winds piping drearily;
Yet sea and tempest rise in vain,
We'll bless our blazing hearth's again.

Push bravely, Mates! Our guiding star
Now from its towerlet streameth far;
And now along the nearing strand,
See, swiftly moves yon flaming brand:
Before the midnight watch is past,
We'll quaff our bowl and mock the blast.

Bast. (*without.*) Holla, good Mate! Thou who so bravely sing'st!
Come down, I pray thee.

1st Fish. Who art thou who call'st?

2d Fish. I know the voice; 'tis Sign'or Bastiani.

1st Fish. What! he, at such an hour, upon the cliff!
(*Calling down.*) I cannot come. If, from my station here,
This fire untended, I were found; good sooth!
I had as lief the luckless friar be,
Who spilt the Abbot's wine.

2d Fish. I'll go to him. [EXIT.

1st Fish. (*muttering to himself.*) Aye; leave my watch, indeed! a rare entreaty!

Enter BASTIANI.

Bast. Wilt thou not go? A boat near to the shore,
In a most perilous state, calls for assistance?
Who is like thee, good Stephen, bold and skilful?
Haste to its aid, if there be pity in thee,
Or any Christian grace. I will, meantime,
Thy beacon watch; and, should the lady come,
Excuse thy absence. Haste; make no reply.

1st Fish. I will; God help us all! [EXIT.

Bast. Here is, indeed, a splendid noble fire
Left me in ward. It makes the darkness round,
To its fierce light oppos'd, seem thick and palpable,
And clos'd o'er head, like to the pitchy cope

Of some vast cavern.——Near at hand, methinks,
Soft female voices speak: I'll to my station.
(*Retires from the front of the stage behind the fire.*)

Enter AURORA, TERENTIA and VIOLA.

Viol. A rousing light! Good Stephen hath full well
Obey'd your earnest bidding.—Fays and witches
Might round its blaze their midnight revelry
Right fitly keep.
Ter. Aye; thou lov'st wilds and darkness,
And fire and storms, and things unsooth and strange:
This suits thee well. Methinks, in gazing on it,
Thy face a witch-like eagerness assumes.
Viol. I'll be a goblin then, and round it dance.
Did not Aurora say we thus should hold
This nightly vigil. Yea, such were her words.
Aur. They were light bubbles of some mantling thought,
That now is flat and spritless; and yet,
If thou art so inclined, ask not my leave,
Dance if thou wilt.
Viol. Nay, not alone, sweet sooth!
Witches, themselves, some fiend-like partners find.
Ter. And so may'st thou. Look yonder; near the flame
A crested figure stands. That is not Stephen.
Aur. (*eagerly.*) A crested figure! Where?
O call to it! (Bast. *comes forward.*)
Ter. 'Tis Bastiani.
Aur. Aye; 'tis Bastiani:
'Tis he, or any one; 'tis ever thus;
So is my fancy mock'd.
Bast. If I offend you, Madam, 'tis unwillingly.
Stephen has for a while gone to the beach
To help some fishermen, who, as I guess,
Against the tide would force their boat to land
He'll soon return; meantime, I did intreat him
To let me watch his Beacon. Pardon me;
I had not else intruded; tho' full oft
I've clamber'd o'er these cliffs, ev'n at this hour,
To see the ocean from its sabled breast
The flickering gleam of these bright flames return.
Aur. Make no excuse, I pray thee. I am told
By good Terentia thou dost wish me well,
Tho' Ulrick long has been thy friend. I know
A wanderer on the seas in early youth
Thou wast, and still can'st feel for all storm-toss'd
On that rude element.
Bast. 'Tis true, fair Lady: I have been, ere now,
Where such a warning light, sent from the shore,
Had saved some precious lives; which makes the task,
I now fulfil, more grateful.
Aur. How many leagues from shore may such a light
By the benighted mariner be seen?
Bast. Some six or so, he will descry it faintly,
Like a small star, or hermit's taper, peering
From some cav'd rock that brows the dreary waste;
Or like the lamp of some lone lazar-house,
Which through the silent night the traveller spies
Upon his doubtful way.
Viol. Fie on such images!
Thou should'st have liken'd it to things more seemly.
Thou might'st have said the peasant's evening fire
That from his upland cot, thro' winter's gloom,
What time his wife their ev'ning meal prepares,
Blinks on the traveller's eye, and cheers his heart;
Or signal-torch, that from my Lady's bower
Tells wand'ring knights the revels are begun;
Or blazing brand, that from the vintage-house
O' long October nights, thro' the still air
Looks rousingly.———To have our gallant Beacon
Ta'en for a lazar house!
Bast. Well, Maiden; as thou wilt: thy gentle Mistress
Of all these things may choose what likes her best,
To paint more clearly how her noble fire
The distant seamen cheers, who bless the while
The hand that kindled it.
Aur. Shall I be bless'd——
By wand'ring men returning to their homes?
By those from shipwreck sav'd, again to cheer
Their wives, their friends, their kindred?
Blessed by those!
And shall it not a blessing call from heaven?
It will; my heart leaps at the very thought,
The seaman's blessing rests upon my head
To charm my wand'rer home.——
Heap on more wood:
Let it more brightly blaze.—Good Bastiani,
Hie to thy task, and we'll assist thee gladly.
(*As they begin to occupy themselves with the fire, the sound of distant voices, singing in harmony, is heard under the stage as if ascending the cliff.*)
Aur. What may it be?
Viol. The songs of paradise,
But that our savage rocks and gloomy night
So ill agree with peaceful soothing bliss.
Ter. No blessed spirits in these evil days
Hymn, thro' the stilly darkness, strains of grace.
Aur. Nay list; it comes again.
(*Voices heard nearer.*)

Ter. The mingled sound comes nearer, and betrays
Voices of mortal men.
Viol. In such sweet harmony!
I never heard the like.
Aur. They must be good and holy who can utter
Such heavenly sounds.
Bast. I've surely heard before
This solemn chorus chaunted by the knights,
The holy brothers of Jerusalem.
It is a carrol sung by them full oft,
When saved from peril dire of flood or field.
Aur. The knights of blest St. John from Palestine!
Alas! why feel I thus? knowing too well
They cannot bring the tidings I would hear.
(*Chorus rises again very near.*)
Viol. List, list! they've gain'd the summit of the cliff:
They are at hand; their voices are distinct;
Yea, ev'n the words they sing.

(*A solemn Song or Hymn, sung in harmony heard without.*)

Men preserv'd from storm and tide
And fire and battle raging wide;
What shall subdue our steady faith,
Or of our heads a hair shall skathe?
Men preserv'd, in gladness weeping,
Praise Him, who hath alway our souls in holy keeping.

And whereso'er in earth or sea
Our spot of rest at last shall be;
Our swords, in many a glorious field,
Surviving heroes still shall wield,
While we our faithful toils are reaping
With Him, who hath alway our souls in holy keeping.

Enter six Knights of St. John of Jerusalem in procession, with their followers behind them, who don't advance upon the stage, but remain partly conceal'd behind the rocks.

Aur. Speak to them, Bastiani; thou'rt a soldier;
Thy mind is more composed.—I pray thee do.
(*Motioning* Bast. *to accost them.*)
Bast. This Lady, noble Warriors, greets you all,
And offers you such hospitality
As this late hour and scanty means afford.
Wilt please ye round this blazing fire to rest?
After such perilous tossing on the waves,
You needs must be forspent.
1st Knight. We thank you, Sir, and this most noble dame,
Whose Beacon hath from shipwreck sav'd us. Driven
By adverse winds, too near your rocky coast,
Warn'd by its friendly light, we stood to sea:
But soon discov'ring that our crazy bark
Had sprung a dang'rous leak, we took our boat
And made for shore. The nearest point of land
Beneath this cliff, with peril imminent,
By help of some good fishermen we gained;
And here, in God's good mercy, safe we are
With grateful hearts.
Aur. We praise that mercy also
Which hath preserv'd you.
1st Knight. Lady, take our thanks.
And may the vessel of that friend beloved,
For whom you watch, as we have now been told,
Soon to your shore its welcome freight convey.
Aur. Thanks for the wish; and may its prayers be heard.
Renowned men ye are; holy and brave;
In every field of honour and of arms
Some of your noble brotherhood are found:
Perhaps the valiant knights I now behold,
Did on that luckless day against the Souldain
With brave De Vilencuve for the cross contend
If this be so, you can, perhaps, inform me
Of one who in the battle fought, whose fate
Is still unknown.
1st Knight. None of us all, fair Dame, so honour'd were
As in that field to be, save this young knight.
Sir Bertram, wherefore in thy mantle lapt,
Stand'st thou so far behind? Speak to him, Lady:
For in that battle he right nobly fought,
And may, belike, wot of the friend you mention'd.
Aur. (*going up eagerly to the young Knight.*)
Did'st thou there fight?—then surely thou did'st know
The noble Ermingard, who from this isle
With valiant Conrad went:——
What fate had he upon that dismal day?
Young Kt. Whate'er his fate in that fell fight might be,
He now is as the dead.
Aur. Is as the dead! ha! then he is not dead:
He's living still. O tell me—tell me this!
Say he is still alive; and tho' he breathe
In the foul pest-house; tho' a wretched wand'rer,
Wounded and maim'd; yea, tho' his noble form
With chains and stripes and slav'ry be disgraced,
Say he is living still, and I will bless thee.
Thou know'st—full well thou know'st, but wilt not speak.
What means that heavy groan? For love of God,
Speak to me!
(*Tears the mantle from his face, with which he had conceal'd it.*)
My Ermingard! My blessed Ermingard!
Thy very living self, restored again!
Why turn from me?
Er. Ah! call'st thou this restored?
Aur. Do I not grasp thy real living hand?
Dear, dear!—so dear! most dear!—my lost, my found!
Thou turn'st and weep'st; art thou not so to

Er. Ah! would I were! alas, alas! I'm lost:
Sever'd from thee for ever.
Aur. How so? what mean such words?
Er. (*shaking his head, and pointing to the cross on his mantle.*) Look on this emblem of a holy vow
Which binds and weds me to a heavenly love:
We are, my sweet Aurora, far divided;
Our bliss is wreck'd forever.
Aur. No; thou art still alive, and that is bliss.
Few moments since, what would I not have sacrificed,
To know that in the lapse of many years
I should again behold thee?—I had been——
How strongly art thou moved!—Thou heed'st me not.
Ter. (*to* Aur.) Were it not better he should leave this spot?
Let me conduct him to my quiet bower.
Rest and retirement may compose his mind.
Aur. Aye, thou art right, Terentia.
Ter. (*to the other* Knights.) Noble Knights,
And these your followers! gentle Bastiani
Will to a place of better comfort lead you,
Where ye shall find some hospitable cheer,
And couches for repose.—Have we your leave
That your companion be a little time
Ta'en from your company?
1st Knight. You have, good Lady?
Most readily we grant it.—Heaven be with you,
And this your lovely charge!
(*To* Bast.) Sir, to your guidance
We yield ourselves right gladly.
[Exeunt Knights, &c. *by a path between the rocks, and* Aurora *and* Ermingard, &c. *by another path.*

SCENE II.—AN ANTI-ROOM IN THE HOUSE OF AURORA.

Enter Garcio, beckoning the Page, who presently enters by the opposite side.

Gar. Come hither, little Friend, who did'st before
Serve me so willingly. Wilt thou from me
Bear to Sir Ermingard a friendly message;
And say his old companion——
Page. Nay, I dare not.
The holy legate and the pope besides
Might not disturb him now; for dame Terentia
Hath so decreed. He is in her apartment,
And yonder is the door.
(*Pointing off the stage.*)
Gar. From which ev'n now
I saw thee turn?
Page. I listen'd not for harm.
Gar. Do I accuse thee, Boy? Is he alone?
Or is thy Lady with him?
Page. That I know not.
Do folks groan heaviest when they are alone?
Gar. Full oft' they do; for then without restraint
They utter what they feel.
Page. Then, by my beard, I think he be alone!
For as I slipped on tiptoe to the door,
I heard him groan so deeply!
Gar. Thou heard'st him groan?
Page. Aye; deeply.
I thought when he return'd, we should be merry:
So starting up at the good tidings, quickly
All darkling as I was, I don'd my clothes:
But, by my beard! I'd go to bed again,
Did I not long most curiously to know
What will betide.
Gar. Speak softly, Boy; thou, and thy beard to boot,
Will badly fare if Ulrick should o'erhear thee.
I know his angry voice: he is at hand.
Page. Where shall I go?—He will not tarry here:
He will but pass to the adjoining hall.
In this dark nook I'll hide me from his sight
Lest he should chide me.
(*Retires behind the pillar.*)
Gar. Is there room for me?
He'll greet me too with little courtesy
If I remain to front him.
(*Retires behind the pillar also.*)

Enter Ulrick and Bastiani, speaking as they enter.

Ul. And still thou say'st forbear!
Bast. Pass on, my Lord.
Ul. No, by the holy rood! I'll keep in sight
Of that accursed door which gave him entrance.
An hour's sand well hath run, which undisturb'd
They have in converse or endearments spent.
And yet I must forbear!
Bast. They have not told the truth who told you so;
It is not yet so long.
Ul. It is! it is!
I have within these walls, who for my service
More faithfully have watch'd than Bastiani—
Aye, or Terentia either.
Bast. Wrong us not.
Since Ermingard returns by holy vows
So bound, that as a rival to your love,
You may, with honest thoughts of her you love,
No more consider him; all jealousy
Within your noble breast should be extinct.
Then think not to disturb these few short moments
Of unavailing sorrow; that were cruel.
Ul. Thou pitiest others well; I am tormented,
And no one pities me.—That 'cursed Beacon!
I said in vain this night should be the last:
It was a night too much: the sea had now
Roll'd o'er his lifeless corse; I been at peace.
Bast. For mercy, good my Lord! curb such fell thoughts:

They bear no kindred to your better nature.
Ul. My better nature! Mock me not with words;
Who loves like me, no nature hath but one,
And that so keen——Would the engulphing waves
Had fifty fathom deep entombed him!
Bast. Speak not so loud: pass on; we are within
The observation of a prying household.
Pass on, and presently I'll bring you notice
Of what you would. I pray you stop not here!
[Exeunt Ul. *and* Bast. *while* Gar. *and* Page *come from their concealment.*
Page. He would have chid me shrewdly.
Gar. He is indeed an angry ruthless man,
And Bastiani no slight task will have
To keep his wrath from mischief. To the legate
I'll hie me straight, and ask his better counsel:
So fare thee well, sweet Child.
Page. Nay, take me with you; I'm afraid to stay.
I can my prayers and an Ave-Maria say:
The legate will not chide me.
Gar. Nay, stay behind; thou art secure, poor Elph!
I'll soon return again. [Exeunt.

Scene III.—The apartment of Terentia.

Ermingard and Aurora are discovered with Terentia, who is withdrawn to a distance from them. Ermingard is seated with his body thrown back, and his face covered with both his hands, while Aurora stands by him in the attitude of one who is entreating or soothing him.

Erm. O cease! Thy words, thy voice, thy hand on mine,
That touch so dearly felt, do but enhance
An agony too great.——Untoward fate!
Thus to have lost thee!
Aur. Say not, thou hast lost me.
Heaven will subdue our minds, and we shall still,
With what is spar'd us from our wreck of bliss,
Be happy.
Erm. Most unblest, untoward fate!
After that hapless battle, where in vain
I courted death, I kept my name conceal'd.
Ev'n brave De Villeneune, master of our Order,
When he received my vows, did pledge his faith
Not to declare it. Thus I kept myself
From all communication with these shores,
Perversely forwarding my rival's will.
O blind and credulous fool!
Aur. Nay, do not thus upbraid thyself: Heaven will'd it.
Be not so keenly moved: there still is left
What to the soul is dear—We'll still be happy.
Erm. The chasten'd pilgrim o'er his lady's grave
Sweet tears may shed, and may without reproach
Thoughts of his past love blend with thoughts of heaven.
He whom the treach'ry of some faithless maid
Hath robb'd of bliss, may, in the sturdy pride
Of a wrong'd man, the galling ill endure;
But sever'd thus from thee, so true, so noble,
By vows that all the soul's devotion claim,
It makes me feel—may God forgive the crime!
A very hatred of all saintly things.
Fool—rash and credulous fool! to lose thee thus!
Aur. Nay, say not so: thou still art mine. Short while
I would have given my whole of life besides
To've seen but once again thy passing form—
Thy face— thine eyes turn'd on me for a moment;
Or only to have heard thro' the still air
Thy voice distinctly call me, or the sound
Of thy known steps upon my lonely floor:
And shall I then, holding thy living hand
In love and honor, say, thou art not mine?
Erm. (*Shaking his head.*) This state—this sacred badge!
Aur. O no! that holy cross upon thy breast
Throws such a charm of valorous sanctity
O'er thy lov'd form; my thoughts do forward glance
To deeds of such high fame by thee achiev'd,
That ev'n methinks the bliss of wedded love
Less dear, less noble is than such strong bonds
As may, without reproach, unite us still.
Erm. O creature of a gen'rous constancy!
Thou but the more distractest me!—Fool, fool!
(*Starting from his seat, and pacing to and fro distractedly.*)
Mean, misbelieving fool!—I thought her false,
Cred'lous alone of evil:—I have lost,
And have deserv'd to lose her.
Aur. Oh! be not thus! Have I no power to soothe thee?
See, good Terentia weeps, and fain would try
To speak thee comfort.
Ter. (*coming forward.*) Aye; bethink thee well,
Most noble Ermingard, Heaven grants thee still
All that is truly precious of her love,—
Her true and dear regard.
Erm. Then Heaven forgive my black ingratitude,
For I am most unthankful!
Ter. Nay, consider,
Her heart is thine: you are in mind united.
Erm. United! In the farthest nook o' th' earth
I may in lonely solitude reflect,

That in some spot—some happier land she lives
And thinks of me. Is this to be united?
Aur. I cannot, in a Page's surtout clad,
Thy steps attend as other maids have done
To other Knights.
Erm. No, by the holy rood!
Thou can'st not, and thou should'st not. Rather would I,
Dear as thou art, weep o'er thee in thy grave
Than see thee so degraded.
Aur. Hear me out.
I cannot so attend thee—noon and eve
Thy near companion be; but I have heard
That, near the sacred houses of your Order,
Convents of maids devout in Holy Land
Establish'd are—maids who in deeds of charity
To pilgrims and to all in warfare maim'd,
In sacred warfare for the holy cross,
Are deem'd the humble partners of your zeal.
Erm. Aye, such there are, but what availeth this?
Aur. There will I dwell, avow'd and humble sister.
We shall not far be sever'd. The same winds
That do o' nights thro' your still cloisters sigh,
Our quiet cells visiting with mournful harmony,
Shall lull my pillow too. Our window'd towers
Shall sometimes shew me on the neighbouring plains,
Amidst thy brave companions, thy mail'd form
Crested with glory, on thy pawing steed
Returning from the wars. And when at last
Thou art in sickness laid—who will forbid
The dear sad pleasure—like a holy bride
I'll by thy death-bed stand, and look to heaven,
Where all bless'd union is. O! at the thought,
Methinks this span of life to nothing shrinks,
And we are bless'd already. Thou art silent:
Dost thou despise my words?
Erm. O no! speak to me thus: say what thou wilt:
I am subdued. And yet these bursting tears!
My heart is rent in twain: I fear—I fear
I am rebellious still. (*Kneeling, and taking both her hands between his, and kissing them with great devotion.*)
School me or chide me now: do what thou wilt:
I am resign'd and humble.
Ter. (*advancing to them with alarm.*)
Hear ye that noise without?—They force the door,
And angry Ulrick comes.
Erm. (*starting from his knees furiously.*)
Thank heaven, this hated rival front to front
Shall now oppose me! God avenge the right!

Enter Ulrick, bursting into the room, followed by Bastiani.

Ul. (*to* Erm.) Vow'd holy Knight; from all vain earthly love
Pure and divided; in a lady's chamber
Do we surprise thee? Quit it instantly:
It is a place for thee unfit: and know,
In sacred wardship will I keep that maid.
Erm. In sacred wardship! O unblushing face!
What of thy baseness, treachery and falsehood
I could declare, my choaking voice forbids,
Which utterance hath not.—Here's a ready tongue— (*drawing his sword.*)
Defend thee then, and heaven defend the right!
(*They both draw and fight furiously*, Bastiani *endeavoring in vain to interpose; when the* Legate *and his train, with* Garcio *and the* Knights of St. John, *enter and separate them.*)
Leg. Put-up your weapons: to the holy church
This cause belongs, and to her high award
I charge you both that you in all humility
Submit. Lord Ulrick, to the Pope perforce
You must account of this your wardship give,
Or by yourself in person, or your deputy,
To Rome forthwith dispatch'd.
(Ul. *bows sullenly.*)
As for the lady, to my guardian care,
Till we before the holy Father come,
She must commit herself. And thou, Sir Ermingard,
Shalt to the sovereign Pontiff and the patron
Of thy most valiant order, fully shew
Wherein thou'st been aggriev'd. If the bless'd cross
Thou hast assum'd, supposing other vows
That did before engage thee, were annull'd,
By false reports deceived; the holy Urban,
Our wise enlighten'd father, will, I trust,
A dispensation grant, that shall empower thee
To do'ff with honor this thy sacred mantle,
And in its stead a bridegroom's robe assume.
(Ermingard *and* Aurora *both embrace the Legate's knees, who raises them up gently.*)
It is enough; forbear, forbear, my Children;
I am too richly thank'd.
And now we must with sober minds confer:
For when the wind is fair, we sail for Rome.
Some days, perhaps, it may adversely blow—
Perhaps some weeks; for I have known it oft
Hold vessels bound.
Aur. (*tossing up her arms joyfully as she speaks.*)
No; it will change to-morrow.
Erm. Dear ardent Soul! can'st thou command the winds?
(Aur. *shrinks back ashamed.*)
Leg. Blush not, sweet Maid; nor check thy ardent thoughts;
That gen'rous buoyant spirit is a power
Which in the virtuous mind doth all things conquer.
It bears the hero on to arduous deeds:
It lifts the saint to heaven. (*Curtain drops.*)

PREFACE TO THE BRIDE.

To see the mind of a child awaking by degrees from the dreamy indistinctness of infancy to a clearer observation of what it beholds around, and a capacity to compare and to reason on the differences and resemblances which it perceives, is a most pleasing and interesting sight; so in a far greater degree does the rousing a race or nation from its infancy of ignorance and delusion, interest and excite every mind of any feeling or reflection. It was from this natural sympathy that I heard with the most sensible pleasure, some months ago, of the intended translation of my Drama, called "The Martyr," into the Cingalese language, as a work which might have some good effects upon a people of strong passions, emerging from a state of comparative barbarism, and whose most effectual mode of receiving instruction is frequently that of dramatic representation, according to the fashion of their country.—A gentleman to whom Ceylon owes the great benefits conferred on a people by the pure and enlightened administration of justice, and to whose strenuous exertions they are also indebted for the invaluable institution of a trial by native juries,* entertained this opinion of the Drama in question, and afterwards did me the farther honour to suppose that I might write something of the kind, more peculiarly appropriate to the circumstances of that island, which would naturally have a stronger moral effect on the minds of its inhabitants. Pleased to be made, in the humblest degree, an instrument for their good, I most readily promised to endeavour at least to do so. And when they read this piece, or when it is brought before them in representation, they will regard it as a proof that their former judge and friend, though now absent and far separated from them, still continues to take a deep interest in their welfare. So considered, it will not fail to make an impression on their minds to which its own power or merit would be altogether unequal.

But should the individual effects of this Drama be ever so inconsiderable, the profits arising from its publication in England, may be the means of procuring translations into the Cingalese language of more able and useful works, and make, as it were, a first though a low step to an invigorating moral eminence. In these days, when many excellent men are striving at the expense of health and ease, and all that is valued by the world, to spread the light of Christianity in the East; when the lamented Bishop Heber, with the disinterested devotion of an Apostle, joined to the mildness, liberality, ability, courteousness, and good sense which promote and grace every laudable undertaking, has proved himself to be the genuine and noble follower of his blessed Master,—who will not be willing to lend some aid and encouragement to so excellent a purpose? I hope, and strongly hope, that good will be derived, even from such a feeble effort as the present; and that the time will come when the different races of the East will consider every human creature as a brother; while Englishmen, under whose rule or protection they may live, will contemn that policy which founds its security upon ignorance. All past experience is unfavourable to the unmanly and ungenerous maxim. And in the present time, when perfect undisturbed ignorance cannot be obtained, the preservation of it in a middle state, to take no higher view of the subject, will be found to be a very precarious and expensive means of governing. But do I not wrong my countrymen, connected with the East, in supposing that the great proportion of them do entertain such narrow views? Of this at least I am thoroughly persuaded, that if such a supposition does not wrong them at present, it will do so grievously some years hence: for the ignorance I speak of is that which stands opposed to the useful, simple learning which promotes industry and charity. Of those superfluous fantastical acquirements which the overstrained refinement of modern plans of education seems anxious to extend to the lower classes of society, I do not speak.

But I must beg leave to retract what I have said above as to making a first step in this desirable progress. One of Mrs. Hannah More's sacred Dramas was translated into the language of Ceylon, several, I believe, many years ago, and was much liked and admired by the natives. A second or third, or any rank, so as it be a step at all, is honour enough for me.

And now let me address a few words to those whom I shall never see, whom many, *many* leagues of ocean divide from any spot of earth on which my foot hath ever rested or shall ever rest,—those for whose especial use the following Drama was written, and in whose country the story of it is supposed to have happened.

I endeavour to set before you that leading

* The measures above alluded to are detailed in the Asiatic Journal for June, 1827. They are the different measures which were carried into effect by Sir Alexander Johnston, when he was President of His Majesty's Council in Ceylon, and of which Mr. Brougham made honourable mention in his speech on the Present state of the Law, in February, 1828.

precept of the Christian religion which distinguishes it from all other religions, the forgiveness of injuries. A bold and fiery-tempered people is apt to consider it as mean and pusillanimous to forgive; and I am persuaded that many a vindictive and fatal blow has been inflicted by those, whose hearts at the same moment have yearned to pardon their enemies. But Christians, who, notwithstanding the very imperfect manner in which they obey and have obeyed the precepts and example of Jesus Christ, do still acknowledge them, and have their general conduct influenced by them,—are *they* a feeble and unhonoured race? Look round you in your own land, in other countries most connected with your own, and you will acknowledge that this is not the case. You will therefore, I hope, receive in good part the moral of my story.

I wished to have found some event in the real history of Ceylon that might have served as a foundation for my Drama; but not proving successful in my search, which, circumstanced as I am, could not but be very imperfect, I have of necessity had recourse to imagination. But there is one person or character in it which is truly your own, though placed in an imaginary situation, and any country in the world might be proud to claim it.—"Remember," said the son of the first Adigar of the Candian country to his elder brother, who had clung for protection to his wretched mother, when she and all her children were condemned to death by a late king of Candy,—"Remember that we are the sons of a brave man, and should die as becomes his sons: I will be the first to receive the stroke of the headsman." The land which hath produced a child so brave and noble, will also, under favourable circumstances, be fruitful of brave and noble men; and in proportion as her sons become generous and humane, they will also increase in valour and dignity. The little Samar, then, of my play is what the son of the first Adigar would have been in his place, and as such I commend him to your favour and attention.

The views which I have given of the religion of Juan De Creda are true to all that you will find in the history and precepts of Jesus Christ, whenever you are inclined to read those books of our sacred Scripture which we call the Gospels, containing his history, and written by men who were his immediate followers and disciples, being eye and ear witnesses of all that they relate; and let no peculiar opinions or creeds of different classes of Christians ever interfere with what you there perceive plainly and generally taught. It was given for the instruction of the simple and unlearned; as such receive it.

Wishing you all prosperity as a brave and virtuous people,—for brave ye are, and virtuous I hope ye will become,—I bid you farewell.

THE BRIDE.

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

MEN.

RASINGA.
SAMARKOON, *his Brother-in-law.*
JUAN DE CREDA, *a Spanish Physician.*
SAMAR, *a Child, and Son of Rasinga.*
EHLEYPOOLIE, } *Officers of Rasinga.*
MIHDOONY, }
Officers, Domestics, Robbers, Spearmen, &c.

WOMEN.

ARTINA, *Wife of Rasinga, and Sister of Samarkoon.*
MONTERESA, *Mother of Rasinga.*
THE BRIDE.
SABAWATTE.
Nurse, Attendants, &c.
SCENE *in* Ceylon.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—SCENE BEFORE THE CASTLE OF RASINGA.

Enter EHLEYPOOLIE, meeting MIHDOONY and two OFFICERS of the Chieftain's household.

Ehl. Well met, my comrades! I have words for you.
Mih. We doubt it not, thou'rt bountiful in words.
First Offi. Thou never wast a niggard of such treasure.
Ehl. Ay, but the words which ye shall now receive,
Are not the passing ware of daily traffic,
But such as in each list'ner's fancy wakes
Responding sounds, such as from twisted shell
On sea-beach found, comes to the bending ear
Of wand'ring child; sounds strange and full of omen.
Mid. What, evil omen? storms and hurricanes?
Ehl. Fy on't! A stirring, tinkling, hopeful sound;
The ring of scatter'd largess, sweeter far
Than pipe or chord or chaunt of forest birds:
The sound of mummery and merriment:
The sound———
But wherefore stare ye on me thus?
List; I will tell ye what concerns us all.
Mid. Out with it then! for it concerns us all
To be no more tormented with thy folly.
Ehl. Our Lord Rasinga wills, that we, brave mates,
With fifty armed followers and *their* followers,
Shall be in readiness by early dawn,
To march in goodly order to the mountains.
First Offi. I like not mountain warfare.
Second Offi. No, nor I.
Mih. To force our toilsome way through thick rank woods,
With bleeding limbs drained by a hundred leeches!
Ehl. Fye, lazy cowards! shrink ye from adventures
Which gentle lady, in her palanquin,
Will share with you?
Mih. A gentle lady, say'st thou?
Ehl. Yes, ye dull dolts, I say so.—Brave Rasinga
Has with one wife, for a good term of years,
(Lulled by some charm of sorcery) been satisfied.
It is good time that he, like other chiefs,
Should have a first sultana and a second,
Or any such arrangement as becomes
His age and dignity. So, in gay trim
With our arm'd band, we by to-morrow's dawn
Must be in readiness.—These are your orders,
Sent by our lord through me.
Mih. Who is this honoured lady of the mountains?
Ehl. Canst thou not guess?—The aged chieftain's daughter,
Whose petty hold was sack'd by daring robbers
Not many weeks gone by. He and his daughter
Were dragg'd as prisoners from their ruin'd home.
In this sad plight, our chief with Samarkoon,
The valiant brother of his present wife,
And a good strength of spearmen, met them; charged
The bootied spoilers, conquer'd and released
Their wretched prey.—And ye may well suppose
The lady's veil, amidst the strange confusion,
Could not be clutched so close, but that Rasinga
Might see the lovely face it should have covered.
Mih. O now I understand it; for, methinks,
Rasinga had not else brought to his house
Another bride to share it with Artina.
(*Samarkoon, who has entered behind them unperceived, and overheard part of the preceding dialogue, now rushes forward indignantly.*)
Sam. Ye foul-tongued knaves, who so belie your master!
What words are these which ye have dared to utter?

Ehl. My lord, I crave your pardon; I have uttered
The orders which Rasinga charged me with,
That these (*pointing to Mihdoony and Officers*) should straight prepare an armed band
To take their way to-morrow for the mountains.

Sam. To bring a bride from thence? Speak out, I charge thee,
Thou lying knave! Went not thy words thus far?

Ehl. If they be true or lying words, I wot not.
What may within a guarded palanquin
Be from the mountains brought, I may but guess.
Perhaps some speaking bird or jabb'ring ape.

Sam. (*striking him.*) Take that—and that—thou false audacious slave:
Dar'st thou to answer me with mockery?

[Exit Ehleypoolie *sulkily, followed by* Mihdoony *and* Officers; *Manet* Samarkoon.

Base sordid reptiles! for some paltry largess
And passing revelry, they would right gladly
See peace and order and domestic bliss
To misery and wild confusion changed.
Hateful suggestions! base and vague conjectures
Which vulgar minds on slight foundation rear!
All false!——
And yet they are upon my heart
Like the compressure of a coiled boa,
Loathly but irresistible.
A bride!
It cannot be!—Tho' her unveiled face
Was of surprising beauty—O how lovely!
Yet he bestowed on her but frigid praise
And still continued to repress my ardour,
Whene'er I spoke of the fair mountain maid,
With silent stern reserve.—Is this like love?
It is not natural.
Ah! but it is;
It is too natural,—deep subtle nature.
How was my ideot soul so far beguiled
That I ne'er thought of this?
Yes, yes, he loves her!
Loves her whom I so well—so dearly love,
That every female image but her own
Is from my heart effaced, like curling mists
That, rising from the vale, cling for a while
To the tall cliff's brown breast, till the warm sun
Dissolves them utterly.—'Tis so; even she
Whom I have thought of, dreamt of, talked of,—ay,
And talked *to*, though in absence, as a thing
Present and conscious of my words, and living,
Like the pure air around me, every where.
(*after a pause.*)
And he must have this creature of perfection!
It shall not be, whatever else may be!
As there is blood and manhood in this body,
It shall not be!
And thou, my gentle sister,
Must thy long course of wedded love and honour
Come to such end!—Thy noble heart will break.
When love and friendly confidence are fled,
Thou art not form'd to sit within thy bower
Like a dress'd idol in its carv'd alcove,
A thing of silk and gems and cold repose:
Thy keen but generous nature———Shall it be?
I'll sooner to the trampling elephant
Lay down this mortal frame, than see thee wrong'd. (*after a considerable pause.*)
Nay, nay! I am a madman in my rage.
The words of that base varlet may be false.
Good Montebesa shall resolve my doubts.
Her son confides to her his secret thoughts:
To her I'll go and be relieved from torment,
Or know the worst at once. [Exit.

Scene II.—The apartment of Montebesa.

Sabawatte is discovered at work and singing.

SONG.

The gliding fish that takes his play
In shady nook of streamlet cool,
Thinks not how waters pass away,
And summer dries the pool.

The bird beneath his leafy dome
Who trills his carol, loud and clear,
Thinks not how soon his verdant home
The lightning's breath may sear.

Shall I within my bridegroom's bower
With braids of budding roses twin'd,
Look forward to a coming hour
When he may prove unkind?

The bee reigns in his waxen cell,
The chieftain in his stately hold,
To-morrow's earthquake,—who can tell?
May both in ruin fold.

Enter Montebesa as the song is concluded.

Mon. Did I not hear thee singing, as I came,
The song my dear Artina loves to hear?

Sab. Even so, good lady; many a time I sang it
When first I was attendant in her bower;
Ere, at your own desire, and for my honour,
She did resign me to your higher service.

Mon. Sing it no more: alas! she thought not then
Of its contain'd allusions to a fate
Which now abides herself.

Sab. No, not her fate; you surely mean not so:
She is a happy wife, the only wife
Of brave Rasinga, honour'd and beloved.

Mon. She was and is as yet his only wife.

Sab. *As yet* his only wife! and think you then
She will not so continue?

Mon. Sabawatte,

It grieves me much to tell thee what perforce
Must soon be known to all; my son Rasinga
Hath set his heart upon a younger bride,
Perhaps a fairer too.

Sab. (eagerly.) No: not a fairer.
I'd peril life and limb upon the bet,
She is not half so fair, nor half so good.

Mon. Be not so hasty.—Why dost thou regard it
As such a grievous thing? She has already
Enjoyed his undivided love much longer
Than other dames have done with other lords,
And reason teaches she should now give place.

Sab. Reason and cruelty sort ill together;
A loorie haunting with a spotted pard.
Ah! wo the day! Why have you told me this?

Mon. Because I would upon your sadden'd brow
Print traces which may lead our poor Artina
To question thee; and thou who art her friend
Canst by degrees, with gentle wise precaution,
Reveal to her what she must needs be told.

Sab. I cannot: put not such a task on me,
I do implore your goodness!—No, I cannot.

Mon. Hush, hush! I hear the footsteps of a man,
But not Rasinga.—It is Samarkoon;
I know his rapid tread.—Be wise; be silent;
For he a while must live in ignorance.

Enter SAMARKOON, and SABAWATTE retires to some distance.

A happy morning to you, my youthful kinsman!

Sam. As it may prove, good lady · happy morning
Oft leads to woeful eve; ay, woeful noon.

Mon. These are strange sombre words; what is the matter?
Why dost thou look both sorrowful and stern?

Sam. I have good cause, if that which I have heard
Be aught but a malignant, hateful tale,
On mere conjecture founded. Answer me
If thou know'st nothing of a num'rous train
In preparation, by Rasinga's orders,
To fetch home to his house a fair young bride?
There's no such thing.—Speak—speak! I will believe thee;
For if to thee unknown, there's no such thing.—
(A pause, he looking inquisitively in her face.
Thou dost not speak; thou dost not answer me;
There's trouble in thine eye.—A with'ring curse
Light on his heartless heart, if this be true!

Mon. Brave Samarkoon! thou art not wise so fiercely
To question me of that which well may be
Without my knowledge;—that which, if it be,
Nor thou nor I have any power to alter.

Sam. Which *if* it be! that *if* betrays an answer.
A shameful answer, shunning open words.
Dear, dear Artina! thou hast climbed already
The sunny side of Doombra's mountain ridge,
And now with one short step must pass the bounds
Dividing ardent heat from chilling clouds
With drenching mist surcharged.
So suddenly
To bring this change upon her! Cruel craft!
He knows that it will break her tender heart,
And serve his fatal purpose.

Mon. Frantic man!
Thou art unjust, ungenerous, unwise;
For should Rasinga—no uncommon act,
Take to his princely bower a second bride,
Would not Artina still be held in honour,
Her children cherished and their rank secured?

Sam. Such honour as unfeeling worldlings give
To fall'n deserted merit, she will have;
And such security as should-be heirs,
Who stand i' th' way of younger, petted minions,
Find in the house of an estranged sire,
Her children will receive —Alas, alas!
The very bonds of soul-devoted love
That did so long entwine a husband's heart,
For her own life the cord of execution
Will surely prove.- Detested cruelty!
But *is* it so? My head is all confusion,
My heart all fire;—I know not what thou said'st.

Mon. Indeed, young kinsman, thou art now unfit
To hold discourse on such a wayward subject.
She whom thou lov'st so dearly as a brother,
I as a mother do most truly love.
Let this suffice thee, and retire a while,
For I expect Artina, and 'tis meet
She be not now overwhelm'd with thy distress.
Ha! she is here already; tripping lightly
With sparkling eyes, like any happy child,
Who bears away the new-robb'd rock-bird's spoil.

Enter ARTINA, gayly, with an embroidered scarf of many colours in her hand, and running up to MONTEBESA.

Art. Dear mother, look at this! such tints, such flowers?
The spirits of the Peak have done this work;
Not hands of flesh and blood.—Nay, look more closely.
And thou too, Samarkoon. How cam'st thou here?
I pray you both admire the beauteous gift—
Rasinga's gift—which I have just received.

Sam. (*eagerly.*) Received from his own hand, so lately too?

Art. Ev'n now. But did I say from his own hand?
He sent it to me, the capricious man!
Ay, and another present, some days since,
Was also sent.—Ay so it was indeed.

Sam. Was he not wont to bring such gifts himself?
Art. With what a face of gravity thou ask'st
This most important question!—Never mind:
I can devise a means to be revenged,
For all this seeming lack of courtesy.
Mon. Deviso a means to be revenged! and how?
Art. I'll dress old nurse, as my ambassadress,
With robe and veil and pall majestical,
And she shall thank him in a tiresome speech,
(He hates her formal prosing)—that I trow,
Will cure him of such princely modes of sending
His gifts to me.—But ye are wond'rous grave.
What ails thee, brother? Speak, good Montebesa;
I fear he is not well.
Mon. He is not very well.
Art. (*taking his hand affectionately.*)
Indeed he is not.
Sam. (*turning away his face.*)
A passing fit of fever has disturbed me,
But mind it not, Artina.
Art. Nay, nay, but I *will* mind it, gentle brother.
And I have learnt this morning cheering news,—
Good news for thee and all sick folks beside.
Mon. We want good news; what is it thou hast heard?
Art. De Creda, who, by physic magical,
Did cure Rasinga of his fearful malady,
When at the point of death, is just arrived.
Where he hath been these two long years and more
There's not a creature knows. Perhaps i' the moon,
If magic knows the way to climb so high.
Mon. Perhaps in his own land.
Art. Ay, certes, Europe is a wond'rous kingdom,
And well worth visiting, which sends forth men
So gifted and so good.
Sam. I pray thee say not *men*, but only *man*.
Hath it e'er sent another like to him?
Yet wherefore came he to these happier regions
With such a wicked crew?
Art. Nay, blame him not:
His fate hath been disasterous and sad,
As I have heard him say; and woe is me!
Misfortune is not dainty in associates.
Sam. Associates! Solitude in trackless deserts,
Where locusts, ants, and lizards poorly thrive,—
On the bare summit of a rugged peak,
Where birds of prey in dusky circles wing
The troubled air with loud and clam'rous din,
Were to an honest heart endurable,
Rather than such associates.

Art. Ha! does this rouse thee so? Yet, ne'ertheless,
I'll send for him, and he will make thee well.
Sam. I'm well if thou art so, my gentle sister.
Art. And I *am* so; how canst thou doubt it, brother,
Being so loving and so well beloved.
Sam. O yes! thou art indeed beloved most dearly,
Both thee and thine, and so shall ever be
Whilst life gives motion to thy brother's heart.
Art. A brother's heart!—How so? there is a meaning,—
A meaning and a mystery in this.
Tears too are on my hand, dropt from thine eyes;—
O speak and tell the worst!
Sam. I may not now!
I pray thee let me go; I cannot speak.
(*Breaks from her and exit. Then* Sabawatte *comes forward and takes hold of her robe with an action of soothing tenderness.*
Art. (*to Sabawatte.*) Dost thou look on me with pity?—Speak,
I charge thee speak, and tell the fearful cause,
Since no one else will do it.
Mon. My dear Artina, thou shalt know the truth,
Which can no longer be conceal'd; but listen,
Listen with patience to the previous story,
And thou wilt see how fated, strange events,
Have caused within Rasinga's noble heart,
Ev'n he who has so long and dearly loved thee,
A growing possibility of change.
Art. If he is changed, why should I know the rest?
All is comprised in this. (*With actions of despair.*)
Mon. Nay, do not wring thy hands, but listen to me.
Sit on this seat, and call up strength to hear me.
Thou giv'st no heed to me; thou dost not hear.
(*Art. in a low voice after a pause.*)
I'm faint and very cold; mine ears ring strangely;
But I will try to do whate'er thou wilt.
(*after another pause.*)
There *is* a story then: I'll hear it now.
Mon. Rasinga, as thou know'st, did, short while since,
A mountain chief and his fair daughter rescue
From ruffian robbers. In its youthful charms
He saw the virgin's unveil'd face. Alas!
A sight so rare he could not see unmoved.
Restless and troubled, like a strickened wretch
Whom sorcery possesses, for a while
He strove against his passion, but at length
Nature gave way; and thou may'st guess what follows.
Art. What follows!—What has followed?
Mon. Our gates must soon receive this youthful bride;

And thou, dear daughter, must prepare thyself
To bear some natural change.
(*Artina faints away in the arms of* Sabawatte.)
Sab. I knew it would be so! Oh, my dear mistress!
These cruel words have dealt the fatal blow
Mon. Be not afraid of this infirmity,
Which, though it seems appalling, brings relief,
Ev'n like Niwane, when the virtuous soul
Hath run, through many a change, its troubled course.
Let us remove her gently to my couch.
[EXEUNT.

SCENE III.—THE APARTMENTS OF RASINGA.

He enters, followed by EHLEYPOOLIE and MIHDOONY, and is speaking as he enters.

Ras. (*to Ehleypoolie.*) Thou hast done well.
Ehl. I am not given to boasting,
Yet I must say all things are so arranged,
That never bride's array, on such short notice,
Was better order'd, or for gallant show,
Or for security.
Ras. Tis rich and splendid?
Ehl. Our palanquin, with all its colour'd streamers,
Will shine above the guard's encircling heads,
Like any crested mancka, proudly perch'd
Upon the summit of her bushy knoll.
Ras. And have ye pioneers to clear its way?
Ehl. Ay, pioneers, who through a tangled thicket
Make room as quickly as the supple trunk
Of a wild elephant; whilst forest birds
From their rent haunts dislodged, fly up and wheel
In mazy circles, raising clam'rous cries,
And casting noon-day shadows, like a cloud,
On the green woods beneath.
Mih. In truth, my Lord, he makes it well appear
He is not given to boasting.
Ras. (*smiling.*) Not a whit! As meek and modest as a Padur's child.
And having done so much for show and speed,
Good Ehleypoolie, I will take for granted
The chiefest point of all, *security*,
Has not been overlook'd; for mountain robbers
May yet be lurking near some narrow pass.
Ehl. Well, let them lurk and burst upon us too;
'Twill be as though a troop of mowing monkeys,
With antic mimic motions of defiance,
Should front the brinded tiger and his brood;
Full soon, I trow, their hinder parts are seen
Lank and unseemly, to the en'my turn'd,
In scamp'ring haste, to gain the nearest shelter.
It were good sport if they should dare to face us.
Mih. You see, my Lord, he is in all things perfect.
Ras. I see it plainly. Thanks for all thy pains,
Brave Ehleypoolie.
Ehl. Shall we take with us
The pipes and doulas which have hung so long
In the recess of Dame Artina's garden?
Of all your instruments there are not any
That sound so loud and clear.
Ras. (*sternly.*) No, no! I charge thee,
Let nothing there be changed. Thy witless words
Have struck upon my heart a dismal note,
Depressing all its life and buoyancy.
Alas! my joy is like the shimm'ring brightness
Of moving waves, touch'd by the half-risen moon,
Tracing her narrow pathway on the deep:
Between each brighten'd ridge, black darkness lies,
Whilst far on either side, the wat'ry waste
Spreads dim, and vague, and cheerless.
Mih. If such thy thoughts, dost thou repent thy purpose?
Ras. Not so; there's extacy in those bright gleams;
Ay, and though cross'd with darkness black as midnight,
I will enjoy this momentary radiance.

Enter a Slave in haste.

What brings thee here with such a staring face?
Slave. The Lady's coming; she is close at hand.
Ras. Ha! from her father's house, unsent for, come?
Slave. No, not that Lady, sir, it is Artina.
Ras. (*much disturbed.*) I thought my mother would have spared me this.
Is Montebesa with her?
Slave No, my Lord.
She has her children with her.
Ras. Wretched moment!
The sight of them will change my strength to cowardice:
What shall I do?
Ehl. I'll quickly run and say that you are busy,
And cannot see her.
Ras. (*pulling Ehleypoolie back as he is about to go out.*)
Restrain thy heartless zeal; it is most odious.
Shall she be so debarr'd from entrance here,
Whose presence was a blessing and a grace!

Enter ARTINA, leading her youngest Child, and followed by SAMAR, leading his little Sister. RASINGA hastens to meet her, and leads her in silence to the principal seat, at the same time motioning to EHLEYPOOLIE and MIH-

DOONY to withdraw, who immediately leave the apartment.

Here take this seat, Artina.
Art. No, my Lord;
I come not here to sit; I come to kneel,
As now beseems a scorn'd forsaken wife,
Who pleads with strong affection for her children;
Who pleads in painful memory of love
Which thou for many years hast lavished on her,
Till, in the gladness of a foolish heart,
She did believe that she was worthy of it.
Ras. Yes, dear Artina, thou wert worthy of it;
Thou wert and art, and shalt be loved and honour'd
While there is life within Rasinga's bosom.
Why didst thou think it could be otherwise,
Although another mate within my house
May take her place to be with thee associated,
As younger sister with an elder-born?
Such union is in many houses found.
Art. I have no skill in words, no power to reason:
How others live I little care to know:
But this I feel, there is no life for me,
No love, no honour, if thy alter'd heart
Hath put me from it for another mate.
Oh woe is me! these children on thy knees
That were so oft caress'd, so dearly cherish'd,
Must then divide thy love with younger fav'rites,
Of younger mother born? Alas! alas!
Small will the portion be that falls to them.
Ras. Nay, say not so, Artina; say not so.
Art. I know it well. Thou thinkest now, belike,
That thou wilt love them still; but ah! too soon
They'll be as things who do but haunt thy house,
Lacking another home, uncheer'd, uncared for.
And who will heed their wants, will soothe their sorrow,
When their poor mother moulders in the grave,
And her vex'd spirit, in some other form,
Is on its way to gain the dreamless sleep.
Kneel, Samar, kneel! thy father lov'd the first,
In our first happy days.—Wilt thou not, boy?
Why dost thou stand so sullen and so still?
Samar. He loves us not.
Art. Nay, nay, but he will love us.
Down on thy knees! up with thy clasped hands!
Rasinga, O Rasinga! did I think
So to implore thy pity—me and mine
So to implore thy pity, and in vain!
(*Sinks on the ground exhausted with agitation.*)
Ras. (*raising her gently in his arms.*) Dearest Artina! still most dear to me;
Thy passionate affections waste thy strength;
Let me support thee to another chamber,
More fitting for retirement and for rest.
Come also, children.—Come, my little playmates!
Samar. We're not thy playmates now.
Ras. What dost thou say?
Samar. Thou dost not speak and smile and sport with us
As thou wert wont: we're not thy playmates now.
Ras. Thou art a fearless knave to tell me so.
[EXEUNT Artina *leaning on her husband and the children following.*

SCENE IV.—A RETIRED GROVE NEAR THE CASTLE OF RASINGA.

Enter SAMARKOON and a Forest FREEBOOTER.
Sam. Now stop we here; in this sequester'd spot,
We may with freedom commune on the purpose
For which I would engage thy speedy aid.
Thou knowest who I am; and dost remember
Where, how, and when I last encounter'd thee?
Freeb. I do, my Lord; but though thou find'st me thus,
Alone and slightly arm'd, be well assured
I will defend my life and liberty,
Against thyself (*looking suspiciously round*) or any ambush'd band
To the last bloody push of desperation.
Sam. I know thou wilt; it is thy desp'rate prowess
Which makes me now, all robber as thou art,
And lurking here disguised, as well I guess,
For no good end,—to seek thy amity.
Freeb. My amity! the noble Samarkoon—
A chief of rank, and brother of Rasinga!
Sam. Strong passion by strong provocation roused
Is not a scrup'lous chooser of its means.
How many of these armed desperadoes,
From whose fell hands we did so lately rescue
That petty chieftain and his child, could'st thou
Within short time assemble?
Freeb. Few remain
Of those who once, at call of my shrill horn,
With spear and bow in hand, and quiver'd back
The deadly arrows bearing, issued forth
From cave or woody jungle, fierce but stealthy,
Like glaring, tawny pards,—few, few remain.
Sam. But some remain?
Freeb. Ay, some.
Sam. And they are brave?
Freeb. No braver bandits e'er in deadly strife
With man or tiger grappled.
Sam. Enough, hie quickly to thy forest haunts,
And near the narrow pass where ye sustain'd
The onset of Rasinga, wait my coming
With all the armed mates thou canst assemble,
And there I'll join thee with a trusty band.
Do this, and thou shalt be rewarded richly.

Freeb. I will; nor do I doubt the recompense
From such a noble chief will be most bountiful.

Sam. Tis well; be speedy, secret, faithful,—brave
I need not say. So let us separate,
Nor stay for further parley; time is precious.

Freeb. I will but go to leave an offering
At the Wihare yonder, then with speed
Wend to our woods.—But wherefore smilest thou?

Sam. Dost thou regard such duties?

Freeb. Ay, good sooth!
Who has more need of favour from the gods
Than he who leads a life of lawless peril? [EXIT.

Sam. (*exultingly.*) Ay, now, Rasinga, set thy costly chamber,
While poor Artina sighs and weeps unheeded,
In gallant order for thy fair new bride!
Another bridegroom and another chamber
Abide her which thou little thinkest of. [EXIT.

ACT II.

SCENE I.—THE CASTLE OF SAMARKOON. LOUD SHOUTING HEARD WITHOUT.

Enter several DOMESTICS in confusion.

First Dom. What shouts are those? do enemies approach?
What can we do in our brave master's absence?

Second Dom. Ha! hear it now! it is no enemy;
It is our Lord himself; I know the sound.
And lo! his messenger arrived with tidings.

Enter a MESSENGER.

What are thy news?

Mes. Right joyful news, I warrant.
Our master brings a bride, by conquest won,
To be the bliss and sunshine of his house;
A bride fair as the goddess, bright Patine.

First Dom. Most unexpected tidings! Won by conquest?

Second Dom. With whom has he been fighting for such prize?

Mes. Fy, fy! despatch and make such preparation
As may be fitting for a bride's reception:
There is no time for telling stories now.
Despatch, I say; do ye not hear them nearer?
They are not many furlongs from the gate. [EXEUNT *in haste different ways.*

SCENE II.—THE HALL OR PRINCIPAL ROOM OF THE CASTLE.

Enter SAMARKOON leading in a LADY covered with a veil, and followed by two Female Attendants; then a band of Musicians and a train of armed Men with EHLEYPOOLIE and several of his SOLDIERS as prisoners. A Nuptial Chaunt or Song is struck up.

SONG.

Open wide the frontal gate,
The Lady comes in bridal state;
Than wafted spices sweeter far,
Brighter than the morning star;
Modest as the lily wild,
Gentle as a nurse's child.
A lovelier prize of prouder boast,
Never chieftain's threshold crost.

Like the beams of early day,
Her eyes' quick flashes brightly play;
Brightly play and gladden all
On whom their kindly glances fall.
Her lips in smiling weave a charm
To keep the peopled house from harm.
In happy moment is she come
To bless a noble chieftain's home.

Happy be her dwelling here,
Many a day and month and year!
Happy as the nested dove
In her fruitful ark of love!
Happy in her tented screen!
Happy in her garden green!
Thus we welcome, one and all,
Our lady to her chieftain's hall.

Sam. I give ye all large thanks, my valiant warriors,
For the good service ye have done to me
Upon this day of happy fate. Ere long,
This gentle lady too, I trust, will thank you,
Albeit her present tears and alter'd state
Have made her shrink and droop in cheerless silence.
An ample recompense ye well have won,
Which shall not with a sparing hand be dealt.
Meantime, partake our cheer and revelry;
And let the wounded have attendance due;
Let sorcery and med'cine do their best
To mitigate their pain.
(*Turning to the Prisoners.*)
Nay, Ehleypoolie,
Why from beneath those low'ring brows dost thou
Cast on the ground such wan and wither'd looks?
Thy martial enterprise fell somewhat short
Of thy predictions and thy master's pleasure;
But thou and all thy band have bravely fought,
And no disgrace is coupled with your failure.

Ehl. Had not my amulets from this right arm
Been at the onset torn, ev'n ambush'd foes
Had not so master'd us.

Sam. Well, be it so; good amulets hereafter
Thou may'st secure, and fight with better luck.

Ehl. Ay, luck was on your side, good sooth! such luck
As fiends and magic give. Another time——

Sam. What thou wilt do another time, at present

We have no time to learn. (*to his followers generally.*)
Go where cool sparkling cups and sav'ry viands
Will wasted strength recruit, and cheer your hearts.
Ere long I'll join you at the board, and fill
A hearty cup of health and thanks to all.
[EXEUNT *all but* Samarkoon, *the* Bride, *and her Female Attendants.*
And now, dear maid, thou pearl and gem of beauty,
The prize for which this bloody fray was fought,
Wilt thou forgive a youthful lover's boldness,
And the rude outrage by his love committed?
Wilt thou not speak to me?

Bride. What can I say?
I was the destined bride of great Rasinga;
My father told me so.

Sam. But did thy heart—
Did thine own heart, sweet maid, repeat the tale?
And did it say to thee, "the elder chieftain
Is he whom I approve; his younger rival
Unworthy of my choice?"

Bride. My choice! a modest virgin hath no choice.
That I have seen you both; that both have seen
My unveil'd face, alas! is my dishonour,
Albeit most innocent of such exposure.

Sam. Say not dishonour; innocence is honour,
And thou art innocent and therefore honourable,
Though every slave and spearman of our train
Had gaz'd upon thy face. The morning star
Receives no taint for that a thousand eyes,
All heaven-ward turn'd, admire its lovely brightness.
Let me again look in thy dark soft eyes,
And read my pardon in one beamy smile.
(*Attempting to draw aside her veil while she gathers it the closer.*)

Bride. Forbear, forbear! this is indignity.

Sam. And this, dear maid, is childish bashfulness.
(*The upper fastening of the veil gives way and falls over her hand.*)
And look, the silly fence drops of itself;
An omen of good fortune to my love.
Oh! while those eyes are fixed upon the ground,
Defended from too ardent admiration,
With patience hear my suit.—Two rival chiefs
Have look'd upon thy face, and thou perforce
Must choose or one or other for thy husband.
Rasinga in his rich and noble mansion,
Hath years already pass'd in wedded love;
And is the husband of a virtuous dame,
Whose faithful heart, in giving place to thee,
Will be asunder torn. My house is humble;
No gay and costly treasures deck its walls;
But I am young, unmarried, and my heart
Shall be thine own, whilst thou reign'st mistress here,
As shares the lion's mate his forest cave,
In proud equality.—Thou smilest at this;
And it doth please thy fancy;—yea, a tear
Falls on that smiling cheek; yes, thou art mine.

Bride. Too quickly dost thou scan a passing thought.

Sam. Thanks, thanks! O take my thanks for such dear words!
And speak them yet again with that sweet voice
Which makes my heart dance in its glowing cell.

First At. (*advancing to Samarkoon.*) My Lady is far spent with all this coil;
She has much need of quiet repose. I pray,
On her behalf, let this be granted to her.

Bride. (*to* First At.) I thank thee nurse! (*to* Samarkoon.) My Lord, I would retire.

Sam. I will retire, or do whate'er thou wilt.
Thy word or wish commands myself and mine.
[EXIT.

First At. Thyself and thine! a mighty rich dominion!
Alack, alackaday, the woeful change!
This rude unfurnish'd tower for the fair mansion
Of great Rasinga! Evil was the hour
When those fell demons stopped us on our way.

Bride. O say not so! in great Rasinga's house
A noble wife already holds her state,
And here I shall have no divided pleasure.

First At. Divided! Doth an elder faded wife
In love, in honour, or in riches share
Like portion with a youthful beauty? No!
She doth herself become the flatt'ring subject
Of her through whom the husband's favours flow;
And thereby doth increase her rival's power,
Her state and dignity.
Thou art a simple child, and hast no sense
Of happiness or honour. Woe the day
When those fell demons stopp'd our high career!

Bride. But for my father's anger, and the blood
Which has been shed in this untoward fray,
The day were one of joy and not of woe,
In my poor estimation.

First At. Poor, indeed!

Second At. (*advancing.*) Fy, nurse! how canst thou so forget thyself?
Thy words are rude; my lady is offended.

First At. Who would not, so provok'd, forget herself?
Ah! the rich treasures of Rasinga's palace!
His gaudy slaves, his splendid palanquins!
They have pass'd from us like a mummer's show,
Seen for an hour and gone.

Enter a Female Domestic.

Dom. My master bids me say, the lady's chamber
Is now in readiness. [Exeunt.

Scene III.—The Court of the Castle.

Enter Two Domestics, meeting.

First Dom. The merry revelry continues still
As if but just begun, though Samarkoon
Reminds them anxiously, that preparation
For the defence of this neglected hold,
Is pressing matter of necessity.

Second Dom. Those glutton bandits will not leave a board,
On which good viands smoke or wine cups sparkle,
For all the words of threat'ning or entreaty,
That mortal tongue can utter.

Enter a Third Domestic, in great alarm.

Third Dom. Where is our master?

First Dom. What alarms thee so?

Third Dom. There is a power of armed men advancing.
I saw their dark heads winding through the pass,
Above the bushes shown; a lengthen'd line,
Two hundred strong, I guess.

First Dom. It is Rasinga.

Second Dom. Ring the larum bell,
And rouse those drunken thieves from their debauch.

Third Dom. But I must find our master; where is he?

First Dom. He was i' th' inner court some minutes since.

(*The larum bell is rung, and many people in confusion cross the stage as the scene closes.*)

Scene IV.—An open space before the gate of the Castle; armed men are discovered on the walls.

Enter Rasinga and his Force.

Ras. (*to those on the walls.*) Where is that villain whom ye call your Lord?
Let him appear, and say, why like a robber,—
A reckless, lawless traitor, he hath dared
My servants to attack, my bride to capture,
And do most foul dishonour to my state.
Am I a driv'ling fool,—a nerveless stripling,—
A widow'd ranny, propping infant's rights,
That thus he reckons with impunity
To pour on me such outrage?

Enter Samarkoon above, and stands on the wall over the gate.

Sam. Rasinga, thou art robb'd and thou art wrong'd,
And hast good cause to utter stormy words.

Ras. Ay, and good cause to back those stormy words
With stormy blows which soon shall force that gate,
Make desp'rate entrance through the rifted walls,
And leave within your paltry tower of all
Who dare oppose my arms, no living thing,
Unless thou do restore the mountain beauty,
And all the spoil thou hast so basely won.

Sam. Though I have dared to wrong thee, brave Rasinga,
I've done it in the heat and agony
Of passions that within a generous breast
Are irresistible, and, be assured,
With no weak calculations of impunity.
The living treasure I have robb'd thee of,
I will defend to the extremity
Of desp'rate effort, ev'n in this poor hold,
Mann'd as it is.—I well might speak to thee
Of equal claims to that fair beauty's favour;
Of secret love; of strong fraternal sympathy
With her whose honour'd name I will not utter,
But that were vain.

Ras. Vain as a sea-bird's screams,
To check the wind-scourged ocean's rising billows:
So far thou speakest wisely.—Stern defiance
I cast to thee; receive it as thou may'st,
Audacious traitor!

Sam. And I to thee do cast it back again
With words and heart as dauntless as thine own.

Ras. (*to his followers.*) Here ends our waste of breath and waste of time.
On, pioneers, and let your pond'rous mallets
Break down the gate. To it, my valiant bowmen!
Discharge a shower of arrows on that wall,
And clear it of yon load of miscreant life.

(Rasinga's *followers raise a shout, which is answered by one equally loud from the adverse party, and the attack commences. After great efforts of attack and defence, the gate is at last forced, and* Rasinga *with his force enters the Castle. The Scene then closes.*)

Scene V.—A wild mountain pass, with a bridge swung from one high perpendicular rock to another. The course of a small stream, with its herby margin, seen beneath.

Martial music is heard, and a military procession seen at some distance, winding among the rocks and at length crossing the bridge. Then come the followers of Rasinga in triumph, leading Samarkoon in chains, followed by men bearing a palanquin, and in the rear Rasinga himself, with his principal officers. As he is on the middle of the bridge, Juan De Creda enters below, and calls to him with a loud voice.

Juan. Rasinga, ho! thou noble chief, Rasinga!

Ras. (*above.*) Who calls on me?

Juan. Dost thou not know my voice?

Ras. Juan de Creda, is it thou indeed?
Why do I find thee here?
Juan. Because the power that rules o'er heaven and earth
Hath laid its high commission on my soul,
Here to arrest thee on thy fatal way.
Ras. What mean such solemn words?
Juan. Descend to me and thou shalt know their meaning.
(Rasinga *crosses the bridge and re-appears below.*)
Ras. I have obeyed thee, and do bid thee welcome
To this fair land again.—But thou shrink'st back,
Casting on me looks of upbraiding sorrow:
With thee I may not lordly rights assert;
What is thy pleasure?
Juan. Is he, the prisoner now led before thee,
Loaded with chains, like a vile criminal,
Is he the noble Samarkoon, thy brother?
Ras. Miscall not by such names that fetter'd villain:
He, who once wore them with fair specious seeming,
Is now extinct to honour, base, and treacherous.
The vilest carcase, trampled under foot
Of pond'rous elephant, for lawless deeds,
Was ne'er inhabited by soul more worthless.
Juan. Thy bitter wrath ascribes to his offence
A ten-fold turpitude. Suspect thy judgment.
When two days thought has commun'd with thy conscience,
Of all the strong temptations which beset
Unwary youth by potent passions urged,
Thou wilt not pass on him so harsh a censure.
Ras. When two days thought! If that he be alive,
And wear a human semblance two days hence,
In the fell serpent's folds, the tiger's paws,
Or earthquake's pitchy crevice, with like speed,
Be my abhorred end.
Juan. Hold, hold, Rasinga!
The God, in whose high keeping is the fate
Of every mortal man, or prince or slave,
Hath this behest declared, that sinful man
Should pardon grant to a repentant brother;
Yea, more than this,—to his repentant enemies.
So God commands; and wilt thou prove rebellious?
Ras. Ha! hast thou been in heaven since last we met,
To bring from hence this precious message? Truly
Thou speak'st as if thou had'st.
Juan. No, I have found it in my native land,
Within the pages of a sacred book
Which I and my compatriots do believe
Contains the high revealed will of God.
Ras. Ha! then those Europeans, whom the sea
Hath cast like fiends upon our eastern shores,
To wrong and spoil and steep the soil with blood,
Are not compatriots of thy book-taught land.
What! dost thou cast thine eyes upon the ground?
The stain of rushing blood is on thy cheek.
If they be so, methinks they have obeyed
That heavenly message sparingly.—Go to!
Tell me no more of this fantastic virtue,—
This mercy and forgiveness. Even a woman,
A child, a simpleton, would laugh to scorn
Such strange unnatural duty.
Juan. Call it not so, till I have told thee further—— (*taking his hand.*)
Ras. Detain me not. But that to thee I owe
My life from fatal sickness rescued,—dearly,
Full dearly should'st thou pay for such presumption.
Let go thy hold.
Juan. I will not till thou promise,
Before thy vengeful purpose is effected,
To see me once again.
Ras. I promise then, thou proud and dauntless stranger;
For benefits are traced in my remembrance
With lines as ineffaceable as wrongs.
[Exeunt.

Scene VI.—The house of Montebesa.

Montebesa enters, meeting a Servant, from the opposite side.

Mon. What com'st thou to impart? thy busy face
Is full of mingled meaning, grief and gladness.
Serv. My Lord Rasinga, madam, is returned,—
Return'd victorious; and the fair young bride
Again is rescued by his matchless valour.
Mon. All this is good; hast thou no more to tell?
Serv. Alas! I have; for by his spearmen guarded,
Loaded with chains, most rueful to behold,
Comes Samarkoon. For now it doth appear,
That he, enleagued with robbers, was the spoiler,
Who beat the gallant train of Ehleypoolie,
And bore away their prize.
Mon. Oh, this is dreadful! Clouds o'erlapping clouds
Are weaving o'er our house an evil woof.—
A fearful canopy. It was to us
That ominous sign was sent, but few days past,
When Boodhoo's rays, beneath the noon's blue dome
With shiv'ring motion gleam'd in streaky brightness,
Surpassing mid-day splendour. Woe is me.
I saw it not unmov'd; but little thought,
Ah! little thought of misery like this.

Enter Juan de Creda.

Welcome, De Creda; thou in hour of need

Art ever wise and helpful. Dost thou know
Of this most strange event? Of Samarkoon
As lawless spoiler by Rasinga conquer'd,
And led——

Juan. I do; and come to entreat thee, Lady,
That thou with thy enchaf'd and vengeful son
May'st use a mother's influence to save him.

Mon. Entreaties are not wanted, good De Creda,
For herein I am zealous as thyself.

Juan. He must not die.

Mon. Nor shall, if I can save him.

Juan. Then let us meet Rasinga, as he passes,
Ere he can reach the shelter of his chamber,
Where men are wont to cherish moody wrath;
And we will so beset him with our prayers,
That we shall move his soul, if it be possible.
The fair Artina too must come with us
To beg her brother's life.

Mon. Yes, be it so; but first let us apprise her,
And do it warily, lest sudden grief
O'erwhelm her totally.

Juan. That will be necessary.
And, Lady, let us find her instantly;
We have no time to spare. [Exeunt.

Scene VII.—A gallery or passage leading to Rasinga's chamber.

Enter Rasinga, speaking to an Officer who follows him.

Ras. And let his dungeon be secured to the utmost
With bolt and bars; and set a double guard
To watch the entry. Make it sure, I say;
For if thy prisoner escape, thy life
Shall pay the forfeit. This thou knowest well,
Therefore be vigilant. [Exit Officer.
The very blood is boiling in my veins,
Whilst the audacious braver of my rights,
My arms, my honour, ev'n within a dungeon
And manacled with iron, breathes vital air.

Enter Montebesa by the farther end of the gallery, followed by Artina and Juan de Creda, who remain without advancing further, whilst she approaches her Son with an air of dignity.

Mon. Rasinga, let a mother, who rejoices
In every victory thy arms achieve,
Be it o'er foreign, yea, or kindred foe,
Greet thee right heartily.

Ras. I thank you, Lady.

Mon. But that my pride in thee may be unmixed
With any sense of aught to taint thy glory,
Grant me a boon that will enhance thy triumph,
And make me say with full, elated heart,
Rasinga is my son.

Ras. Name it; whate'er a man may grant is thine.

Mon. The life of Samarkoon; that is my boon.

Ras. The life of Somarkoon! then thou dost ask
The foul disgrace and ruin of thy son.

Mon. Not so; for thine own peace and future weal,
I do adjure thee to be merciful.

Ras. And would'st thou see the son whom thou did'st bear
An unreveng'd, despis'd, derided man?
And have I got from thee and my brave sire
This manly stature and these hands of strength
To play an ideot's or a woman's part?
If such indeed be Montebesa's wish,
Poor slight-bon'd, puny, shambling drivellers,
Or sickly maidens, should have been the offspring
Produced by her to mock a noble house.

Mon. O say not so! there will be no dishonour.

Ras. What! no dishonour in the mocking lips,
And pointing fingers of the meanest peasant,
Who would his whetted blade sheath in the heart
Of his own mother's son for half the wrong,—
Ay, half the wrong which that audacious traitor
Has done to me!—Cease, lady; say no more:
I cannot henceforth live in ignominy,
Therefore, good sooth! I cannot grant your boon.

Art. (*rushing forward and catching hold of his hand and his garments.*)
Dear, dear Rasinga! wilt thou make my life
One load of wretchedness? Thou'st cast me off,—
I who so loved thee and love thee still,—
Thou'st cast me off and I will meekly bear it.
Then, wilt thou not make some amends to me
In a sav'd brother's life, for all the tears,
The bitter tears and anguish this has cost me?

Ras. (*shaking her off.*) Thy plea is also vain; away, away!
Thy tears and anguish had been better comforted,
Had he a more successful spoiler proved.
(*Turning fiercely on Juan de Creda, who now advances.*)
Ha! thou too art upon me! Thou whose kindred
And colleagues are of those who read good lore,
And speak like holy saints, and act like fiends.
By my brave father's soul, where'er it be,
Thou art a seemly suitor for such favour!
(*Bursts away from them and* Exit.)

Art. De Creda, good De Creda, dear De Creda!
Wilt thou not follow him?

Juan. Not now; it were in vain; I might as well,
While wreck of unroof'd cots and forest boughs,
And sand and rooted herbage whirl aloft,
Dark'ning the sky, bid the outrageous hurricane
Spare a rock-cresting palm.—But yet despair not;

I'll find a season. Let me lead thee hence.

Mon. I fear the fierceness of his untam'd spirit
Will never yield until it be too late;
And then he will in brooding, vain repentance,
The more relentless be to future criminals;
As though the death of one he should have spared,
Made it injustice e'er to spare another.
I know his dangerous nature all too well.
[EXEUNT.

SCENE VIII.—A PRISON.

SAMARKOON is discovered in chains; a lamp burning on the ground near him, and a pitcher of water by it.

Sam. And now the close of this my present being,
With all its hopes, its happiness and pain,
Is near at hand,—a violent bloody close,
Perhaps with added torture and disgrace.
Oh, Kattragam, terrific deity!
Thy stern decrees have compass'd all this misery.
Short, turbulent, and changeful, and disast'rous,
Hath been this stage of my existence. What,
When this is past, abides me in my progress
To the still blessing of unvision'd rest,
Who may imagine or conjecture?—Blessing!
Alas! it is a dull unjoyous blessing
To lose with consciousness of pain, all consciousness:
The pleasure of sweet sounds and beauteous sights,
Bride, sister, friends,—all vanish'd and extinct,
That stilly, endless rest may be unbroken.
Oh, oh! he is a miserable man,
Who covets such a blessing!—Hush, bad thoughts!
Rebellious, faithless thoughts! My misery
Is deep enough to make even this a blessing.

Enter ARTINA.

It cannot be! is it some fantasy:
Who and what art thou?

Art. (*approaching him softly.*) The thing I seem; thy miserable sister.

Sam. My gen'rous, loving sister, in her love
Running such fearful risk to comfort me.

Art. Nay, more than this, dear brother; more than comfort;
I come to set thee free.

Sam. Has he relented?

Art. No, no! Rasinga is most ruthless. I,
By means of this, (*showing a signet*) which, in our better days,
It was my privilege to use at will,
Have pass'd the guards, and may a short while hence
By the same means return,—return in safety.
Meantime let me undo those galling fetters;
I've brought fit tools, and thou shalt teach me how.

Sam. But can'st thou think the guards will let thee pass,
Ev'n with thy signet, leading a companion?
It cannot be; thou dost deceive thyself,
Thy mis'ry and affection make thee foolish.

Art. Not so; there is a secret passage yonder.
That stone (*pointing to it*) like many others in the wall,
But rougher still; (*goes close to the stone and touches it*) look at it! take good heed,
Has in its core a groove on which it turns:
A man's full strength will move it, and despair
Will make thee strong.

Sam. Were two men's strength requir'd, I feel within me
The means for such deliverance; if, indeed,
Thou hast not been deceiv'd by some false tale.

Art. I'm not deceiv'd. But wait, when I am gone,
With limbs yet seemingly enthrall'd, until
The wary guard hath come to ascertain
Thy presence here; and then, when he retires,———
Thou know'st the rest.—Haste, let me loose thy shackles.
Is this the way?
(*Kneeling down and using her implements for breaking the chains, which she draws from the folds of her robe.*)

Sam. Well done, my most incomparable sister!
Affection seems to teach thee crafts-man's skill.

Art. This link is broken.

Sam. So it is indeed.
If I am fated yet to live on earth,
A prosp'rous man, I'll have thy figure graven,
As now thou art, with implements in hand,
And make of it a tutelary idol.

Art. (*still working at the chains.*) Ha! thou speak'st cheerly now; and thy changed voice
Is a good omen. Dost thou not remember
How once in play I bound thy stripling limbs
With braided reeds, as a mock criminal?
We little thought———Another link is conquer'd,
And one alone remains. (*Tries to unloose it.*)
But it is stubborn.
Oh, if that I should now lack needed strength!
Vile, hateful link—give way!

Enter RASINGA, and she starts up, letting fall her tools on the ground.

Ras. And thou art here, thou most rebellious woman!
A faithful spy had given me notice of it,
And yet methought it was impossible
Thou could'st be so rebellious, so bereft
Of female honour, matronly allegiance.

Art. Upbraid me not, my Lord; I've at your feet
Implor'd you to relent and spare his life,
The last shoot of my father's honour'd house,

But thou, with unrelenting tyranny,
Hast chid me from thee.—Matronly allegiance,
Even in a favour'd and beloved wife,
O'er-rules not every duty; and to her,
Who is despis'd, abandon'd, and disgraced,
Can it be more imperious? No, Rasinga;
I were unmeet to wear a woman's form,
If, with the means to save my brother's life,
Not implicating thine, I had from fear
Of thy displeasure, grievous as it is,
Forborne to use them.

Ras. Ha! such bold words to justify the act,
Making rebellion virtue! Such audacity
Calls for the punishment which law provides
For faithless and for disobedient wives.

Sam. Rasinga, if that shameful threat be serious,
Thou art the fellest, fiercest, meanest tyrant
That e'er join'd human form to demon's spirit.

Ras. And dost thou also front me with a storm
Of loud injurious clamour?—Ho, without!
(*Calling aloud off the stage.*)
I came not here to hold a wordy war
With criminals and women.—Ho! I say.

Enter GUARDS.

Secure the prisoner, and fasten tightly
His unlock'd chains.—And, Lady, come thou instantly
To such enthralment as becomes thy crime.
[EXEUNT Rasinga *and* Artina, *who is led off by guards, while motioning her last farewell to* Samarkoon. *The scene closes.*

SCENE IX.—AN APARTMENT IN THE HOUSE OF MONTEBESA.

SAMAR is discovered playing on the floor with toys, and SABAWATTE sitting by him.

Samar. (*holding up a toy.*) This is the prettiest plaything of them all:
I will not use it till my mother come,
That she may see it fresh and beautiful.

Sab. Alas, sweet Samar! would that she were here!

Samar. Will she not soon? how long she stays away!
And she has been so kind to me of late.

Sab. Was she not always kind?

Samar. Yes, always very kind, but since my father
Has thought of that new bride—I hate that bride—
And spoken to me seldom and with looks
Not like his wonted looks, she has been kinder;
Has kiss'd me oftener, and has held me closer
To her soft bosom. O she loves me dearly!
And dearly I love her!—Where is she now,
That thou should'st say, "I would that she were here!"

Sab. Dear boy! I may not tell thee.

Samar. May not tell me!
Then she is in some sad and hateful place,
And I will go to her.

Sab. Ah no! thou can'st not.

Samar. I will; what shall withhold me, Sabawatte?

Sab. Strong bolts and bars, dear child!

Samar. Is she in prison?

Sab. She is.

Samar. And who hath dared to put her there?

Sab. Thy father.

Samar. Then he is a wicked man,
Most cruel and most wicked.
I'll stay no longer here: I'll go to her;
And if through bolts and bars I may not pass,
I at her door will live, as my poor dog
Close by my threshold lies and pines and moans
When he's shut out from me.—I needs must go;
Rooms are too good for me when she's in prison.
Come, lead me to the place; I charge thee do;
I'll stay no longer here.

Enter MONTEBESA, and he runs to her, clasping her knees, and bursting into tears.

Mon. What is the matter with thee, my dear child? (*to* Sabawatte.) Does he know aught?

Sab. I could not keep it from him.

Samar. I know it all; I know it all, good grandame.
O take me to her! take me to her prison.
I'll be with her; I'll be and bide with her;
No other place shall hold me.

Mon. Be pacified, dear child! be pacified,
And I myself will take thee to thy mother:
The guards will not refuse to let me pass.
Weep not so bitterly, my own dear Samar!
Fy! wipe away those tears, and come with me.

Sab. A blessing on you, madam, for this goodness!
It had been cruelty to keep him here.
[EXEUNT.

ACT III.

SCENE I.—THE PRIVATE CHAMBER OF RASINGA, WHO IS DISCOVERED WALKING BACKWARDS AND FORWARDS IN GREAT AGITATION.

Ras. That I—that I alone must be restrained!
The very meanest chief who holds a mansion,
May therein take his pleasure with a second,
When that his earlier wife begins to fade,
Or that his wearied heart longs for another.
Ay, this may be; but I am deem'd a slave,
A tam'd—a woman-bound—a simple fool. (*after a pause.*)
Nor did I seek for it; fate was my tempter.
That face of beauty was by fate unveil'd;
And I must needs forbear to look upon it,
Or looking, must forbear to love—Bold traitor!

That he should also, in that very moment,
Catch the bright glimpse and dare to be my rival!
Fy, fy! His jealous sister set him on.
Why is my mind so rack'd and rent with this?
Jealous, rebellious, spiteful as she is,
I need not, will not look upon her punishment.
Beneath the wat'ry gleam one moment's struggle,—
No more but this. (*tossing his arms in agony.*)
Oh, oh! there was a time,
A time but shortly past, when such a thought
Had been———the cords of life had snapt asunder
At such a thought.—And it must come to this!
(*after another perturbed pause.*)
It needs must be; I'm driven to the brink.
What is a woman's life, or any life
That poisons his repose for whom it flourished?
I would have cherish'd, honour'd her, yet she,
Rejecting all, has ev'n to this extremity———
No, no! it is that hateful fiend, her brother,
Who for his damn'd desires and my dishonour
Hath urged her on.—The blood from his shorn trunk
Shall to mine eyes be as the gushing fount
To the parch'd pilgrim.—Blood! but that his rank
Forbids such execution, his marr'd carcass,
A trampled mass—a spectacle of horror,
Should———the detested traitor!
(*Noise at the door.*)
Who is there?

Juan de Creda. (*without.*) Juan de Creda: pray undo thy door.

Ras. No, not to thee; not even to thee, De Creda.

Juan. (*without.*) Nay, but thou must, or fail in honest truth.
I have thy promise once again to see me
Ere thy revengeful purpose take effect;
Yea, and I hold thee to it.

Ras. Turn from my door, for thou since then hast seen me,
And hast no further claim.

Juan. (*without.*) Tamper not so unfairly with thy words:
I saw thee as the forest peasant sees
A hunted tiger passing to his lair.
Is this sufficient to acquit thee? No;
I claim thy promise still, as unredeem'd.
Unbar thy chamber door, and let me in.

Ras. (*opening the door, and as* Juan *enters.*)
Come in, come in then, if it must be so.
Is misery a pleasant sight to thee,
That thou dost pray and beg to look upon it?

Juan. Forgive me, brave Rasinga, if I say,
The mis'ry of thine alter'd face, to me
Is sight more welcome than a brow composed.
But 'tis again to change that haggard face
To the composure of a peaceful mind,
That I am come.—O deign to listen to me!
Let me beseech thee not to wreck thy happiness
For fell revenge!

Ras. Well, well; and were it so,
I wreck my happiness to save my honour.

Juan. To save thine honour?

Ras. Yes; the meanest slave
That turns the stubborn soil with dropping brow,
Would hold an outraged, unrevenged chief
As more contemptible than torpid reptile
That cannot sting the foot which treads upon it.

Juan. When fear or sordid motives are imputed
As causes why revenge hath been forborne,
Contempt will follow, from the natural feelings
Of every breast, or savage or instructed.
But when the valiant and the generous pardon,
Ev'n instantly as lightning rends the trunk
Of the strong Nahagaha, pride o' the wood;
A kindred glow of admiration passes
Through every manly bosom, proving surely,
That men are brethren, children of one sire,
The Lord of heaven and earth.

Ras. Perplex me not with vain and lofty words,
Which to the stunn'd ear of an injur'd man
Are like the fitful sounds of a swoln torrent,
Noble, but void of all distinctive meaning.

Juan. Their meaning is distinct as well as noble;
Teaching to froward man the will of God.

Ras. And who taught thee to know this will of God?

Juan. Our sacred Scripture.

Ras. What? your Christian Scripture,
Which, as I have been told, hath bred more discord
Than all the other firebrands of the earth,
With church oppos'd to church and sect to sect,
In fierce contention; ay, fell bloody strife.
Certes, if all from the same book be taught,
Its words may have, as I before have said,
A noble sound, but no distinctive meaning.

Juan. That which thou hast been told of shameful discord,
Perversely drawn from the pure source of peace,
Is true; and yet it is a book of wisdom,
Whose clear, important, general truths may guide
The simplest and the wisest: truths whic[h] still
Have been by every church and sect ackno[w]ledged.

Ras. And what, I pray, are these acknow ledged precepts
Which they but learn, it seems, to disobe[y?]

Juan. The love of God, and of that bl[esse]d Being,
Sent in his love to teach his will to men;
Imploring them their hearts to purify

From hatred, wrong, and ev'ry sensual excess,
That in a happier world, when this is past,
They may enjoy true blessedness forever.

Ras. Then why hold all this coil concerning that
Which is so plain, and excellent, and acknowledged?

Juan. Because they have in busy restless zeal
Rais'd to importance slight and trivial parts;
Contending for them, till they have at last
Believ'd them of more moment, ev'n than all
The plain and lib'ral tenor of the whole.
As if we should maintain a wart or mole
To be the main distinctions of a man,
Rather than the fair brow and upright form,—
The graceful, general lineaments of nature.

Ras. This is indeed most strange: how hath it been?

Juan. The Scripture lay before them like the sky
With all its glorious stars, in some smooth pool
Clearly reflected, till in busy idleness,
Like children gath'ring pebbles on its brink,
Each needs must cast his mite of learning in
To try its depth, till sky and stars, and glory,
Become one wrinkled maze of wild confusion.
But that good Scripture and its blessed Author
Stand far and far apart from all this coil,
As the bright sky from the distorted surface
Of broken waters wherein it was imaged.

Ras. And this good Scripture does, as thou believest,
Contain the will of God.

Juan. I do believe it.
And therein is a noble duty taught,
To pardon injuries,—to pardon enemies.

Ras. I do not doubt it. 'Tis an easy matter
For holy sage or prophet in his cell,
Who lives aloof from wrongs and injuries
Which other men endure, to teach such precepts.

Juan. Most justly urged: but he who utter'd this
Did not enforce it at a rate so easy.
Though proved by many good and marv'llous acts
To be the mission'd Son of the Most High,
He meekly bore the wrongs of wicked men;
And, in the agonies of crucifixion,
The cruel death he died, did from his cross
Look up to heaven in earnest supplication
Ev'n for the men who were inflicting on him
Those shameful suff'rings,—pardon ev'n for them.

Ras. (*bowing his head, and covering his face with his hands.*) Indeed, indeed, this was a noble Being.

Juan. Ay, brave Rasinga; ireful as thou art,
Thou hast a heart to own such excellence.
(*Laying his hand soothingly on* Rasinga's.)
And do consider too how he who wrong'd thee,—
The youthful Samarkoon——

Ras. (*shaking off his hand impatiently.*)
Name not the villain.

Juan. That epithet belongs not to a youth,
Who in the fever'd madness of strong passion,
By beauty kindled, goaded by despair,
Perhaps with sympathy, for that he deem'd
A sister's sorrows——

Ras. Hold thy peace, De Creda;
Thy words exasperate and stir within me
The half-spent flames of wrath.
He is a villain, an audacious villain;
A most ungrateful, cunning, artful villain.
Leave me, I charge thee, lest thou utter that
Which might provoke me to unseemly outrage.
I owe my life to thee, and but for that——
Leave me, I charge thee.

Juan. I do not fear what thou may'st do to me.

Ras. No; but *I* fear it, therefore quit me instantly.
Out, out! (*Opening the door and pushing him away.*)
Ho! Ehleypoolie! ye who wait without,
I want your presence here. [Exit Juan.

Enter Ehleypoolie and Mihdoony.

Ehl. (*after having waited some time to receive the commands of his master, who without noticing him walks about the chamber in violent agitation.*) My Lord, we humbly wait for your commands. (*aside to* Mihdoony.)
He heeds us not: as though we were not here. (*aloud.*)
We humbly wait, my Lord, to know your pleasure.

Ras. My pleasure is——
(*Stopping and looking bewildered.*)
I know not what it is.

Mih. Perhaps, my Lord, you wish to countermand
Some orders that regard the executions,
Fix'd for to-morrow, at an hour so early.

Ras. When did Rasinga countermand his orders,
So call'd for, and so given?—Why wait ye here?

Ehl. You call'd for us, my Lord; and well you know
That Ehleypoolie hath a ready aptness
For——

Ras. Boasting, fooling, flattery, and lies.
Be gone, I say; I did not call for you.
At least I meant it not.
(*Turns away hastily and* exit *by another door.*)

Ehl. For boasting, fooling, flattery, and lies!
How angry men pervert all sober judgment!
If I commend myself, who like myself
Can know so well my actual claims to praise?

Mih. Most true, for surely no one else doth know it.

Ehl. And fooling is an angry name for wit.

Mih. Thy wit is fooling, therefore it should seem
Thy fooling may be wit. Then for thy flattery,

What dost thou say to that?

Ehl. Had he dislik'd it,
It had been dealt to him in scantier measure.
And lies—to hear a prince whose fitful humours
Can mar or make the vassals who surround him,
Name this as special charge on any one!
His violent passions have reduced his judgment
To very childishness.

Mih. But dost thou think the fierceness of his wrath
Will make him really bring to execution
A wife who has so long and dearly loved him?

Ehl. How should I know what he will really do?
The words he spoke to me ev'n now may show thee
His judgment is obscured. But if he do,
Where is the harm when faded wives are cross
And will not live in quietness with a younger,
To help them on a step to their Newane?
She never favour'd me, that dame Artina,
And I foresaw she would not come to good.

[Exeunt.

Scene II.—A large court or open space with every thing prepared for the execution of Samarkoon: a seat of state near the front of the stage.

Spectators and Guards discovered.

First Spec. There is a mass of life assembled here:
All eyes, no voice; there is not even the murmur
Of stifled whispers.—Deep and solemn silence!

Second Spec. Hush, hush! Artina comes, and by her side,
Her son in the habiliments of one
Prepared for death. This surely cannot be:
It is impossible.

First Spec. I hope it is.

Enter Artina and Samar, with Sabawatte on the one side of them, and Juan de Creda on the other; attendants following.

Art. Alas, for thee, my noble, generous child!

Samar. Fear not for me, dear mother
Lean upon me.
Nay, let me feel your hand press'd on my shoulder,
Press'd more upon me still. It pleases me,
Weak as I am, to think I am thy prop.

Art. O what a prop thou would'st have been to me!
And what a creature for a loathly grave,—
For death to prey upon!—Turn, turn! Oh, turn!
Advance no further on this dreadful path.

Samar. I came not here to turn; and for the path,
And what it leads to, if you can endure it,
Then so can I:—fear not for me, dear mother!
Nay, do not fear at all; 'twill soon be over.

Art. Oh! my brave heart! my anguish and my pride,
Even on the very margin of the grave.——
Good Sabawatte! hold him; take him from me.

Sab. I cannot, madam; and De Creda says,
'Tis best that you should yield to his desire.

Art. It is a fearful—an appalling risk.

Sab. Is there aught else that you would charge me with?

Art. Yes, dearest friend, there is—it is my last.
Let not my little daughters know of this;
They are too young to miss me. Little Moora
Will soon forget that she has seen my face;
Therefore whoe'er is kind to them they'll love.
Say this to her, who will so shortly fill
Their mother's place, and she will pity them.
Add, if thou wilt, that I such gentle dealings
Expected from her hands, and bade thee teach them
To love and honour her.

Sab. My heart will burst in uttering such words.

Art. Yet for my sake thou'lt do it; wilt thou not?

(Sabawatte *motions assent, but cannot speak.*)

Enter Samarkoon, chained and guarded.

Art. (*rushing on to meet him.*) My brother, my young Samarkoon, my brother,
Whom I so lov'd in early, happy days;
Thou top and blossom of my father's house!

Sam. Weep not, my sister, death brings sure relief;
And many a brave man's son has died the death
That now abideth me.

Art. Alas! ere that bright sun which shines so brightly
Shall reach his noon, of my brave father's race
No male descendant shall remain alive,—
Not one to wear the honours of his name,
And I the cursed cause of all this wreck!
Oh, what was I, that I presumptuously
Should think to keep his undivided heart!
'Twere better I had liv'd a drudge,—a slave,
To do the meanest service of his house,
Than see thee thus, my hapless, noble brother.

Sam. Lament not, gentle sister; to have seen thee
Debased and scorn'd, and that most wond'rous creature,
Whose name I will not utter, made the means
Of vexing thee—it would have driven me frantic.
Then do not thus lament; nor think that I
Of aught accuse thee. Let us now take leave,
In love most dearly link'd, which only death
Has power to sever.———

(*to* Samar, *as first observing him.*)
Boy, why art thou here?

Samar. To be my mother's partner and companion.
'Tis meet; for who but me should cling to her?

Enter Rasinga, and places himself in the seat: a deep silence follows for a considerable time.

Mih. (*who has kept guard with his spearmen over* Samarkoon, *now approaching* Rasinga.) The hour is past, my Lord, which was appointed;
And you commanded me to give you notice.
Is it your pleasure that the executioners
Proceed to do their office on the prisoners,
Who are all three prepared?

Ras. What dost thou say?

Mih. The three prepared for death abide your signal.

Ras. There are but two.

Mih. Forgive opposing words, there is a third.

Ras. A third, say'st thou? and who?

Mih. Your son, my Lord;
A volunteer for death, whom no persuasion
Can move to be divided from his mother.

Ras. I cannot credit this; it is some craft,—
Some poor device. Go, bring the boy to me.
(Mihdoony *leads* Samar *to his father.*)
Why art thou here, my child? and is it so,
That thou dost wish to die?

Samar. I wish to be where'er my mother is,
Alive or dead.

Ras. Think well of what thou say'st!
It shall be so if thou indeed desire it.
But be advised; death is a dreadful thing.

Samar. They say it is: but I will be with her;
I'll die her death, and feel but what she suffers.

Ras. And art thou not afraid? Thou'rt ignorant;
Thou dost not know the misery of drowning;—
The booming waters closing over thee,
And thou still sinking, struggling in the tank,
On whose deep bottom, weeds and water snakes,
And filthy lizards will around thee twine,
Whilst thou art choaking. It is horrible.

Samar. The death that is appointed for my mother
Is good enough for me. We'll be together:
Clinging to her I shall not be afraid,
No, nor will she.

Ras. But wherefore wilt thou leave thy father, Samar?
Thou'st not offended me; I love thee dearly;
I have no son but thee.

Samar. But thou wilt soon.
Thy new young wife will give thee soon another,
And he will be thy son; but I will be
Son of Artina. We'll be still together:
When in the form of antelope or loorie,
She wends her way to Boodhoo, I shall still
Be as her young-one, sporting by her side.

Ras. (*catching him in his arms and bursting into tears.*)
My generous boy! my noble valiant boy!
O such a son bestowed on such a father!
Live, noble creature! and thy mother also!
Her crime is pardon'd if it was a crime;
Ye shall not be divided.

Samar. (*running back to* Artina.) O mother! raise your eyes! you are to live;
We're both to live, my father says we are.
And he has wept and he has kiss'd me too,
As he was wont to do, ay, fonder far.
Come, come! (*Pulling her towards* Rasinga.)
He's good, you need not fear him now.

Ras. Artina, that brave child has won thy life;
And he hath won for me——I have no words
That can express what he hath won for me.
But thou art sad and silent; how is this,
With life and such a son to make life sweet?

Art. I have a son, but my brave father, soon,—
Who died an honour'd death, and in his grave
Lies like an honour'd chief,—will have no son,
No male descendant, living on the earth
To keep his name and lineage from extinction.
(Rasinga *throws himself into his seat and buries his face in his mantle.*)

First Spec. (*in a low voice.*) Well timed and wisely spoken: 'tis a woman,
Worthy to be the mother of that boy.

Second Spec. (*in a low voice to the first.*)
Look, look, I pray thee, how Rasinga's breast
Rises and falls beneath its silken vesture.

First Spec. (*as before.*) There is within a dreadful conflict passing,
Known by these tokens, as swoln waves aloft
Betray the secret earthquake's deep-pent struggles.

Second Spec. (*as before.*) But he is calmer now, and puts away
The cover from his face: he seems relieved.

Ras. (*looking round him.*) Approach, De Creda; thou hast stood aloof:
Thou feel'st my late rude passion and unkindness.
Misery makes better men than me unkind;
But pardon me and I will make amends.
I would not listen to thy friendly council,
But now I will most freely grant to thee
Whatever grace or favour thou desirest.
Even now before thou nam'st it

Juan. Thanks, thanks, Rasinga! this is brave amends.
(*Runs to* Samarkoon *and commands his chains to be knocked off, and speaking impatiently as it is doing.*)
Out on such tardy bungling! Ye are craftsmen
Who know full well the art to bind men's limbs,
But not to set them free.
(*Leads* Samarkoon *when unbound towards* Rasinga, *speaking to him as they go.*)

Come, noble Samarkoon! nay, look more gracious:
If thou disdain'st to thank him for thy life,
That falls to me, and I will do it gladly.
(*Presenting* Samarkoon *to* Rasinga.)
This is the boon which thou hast granted me,
The life of Samarkoon: a boon more precious
To him who grants than who receives it. Yet
Take my most ardent thanks; take many thanks
From other grateful bosoms, beating near thee.

Art. (*kneeling to embrace the knees of* Rasinga.) And mine; O mine! wilt thou not look upon me?
I do not now repine that thou art changed:
Be happy with another fairer dame,
It shall not grieve me now.

Ras. (*raising her.*) Away, Artina! do not thank me thus.
Remove her, Samarkoon, a little space.
(*Waving them off.*)
Juan De Creda, art thou satisfied?
Have I done well?

Juan. Yes, I am satisfied.

Ras. (*drawing himself up with dignity.*)
But I am not; and that which I have done
Would not have satisfied the generous Saviour
Who died upon the cross.—Thy friend is pardon'd,
And more than pardon'd;—he is now my brother,
And I to him resign the mountain bride.
(*A shout of joy bursts from all around:* Artina *folds* Samar *to her breast, and* Samarkoon *falls at the feet of* Rasinga.)

Sam. My noble generous foe, whom I have wrong'd,
Urged by strong passions, wrong'd most grievously!
Now may I kneel to thee without disgrace,
For thou hast bound me with those bands of strength
That do ennoble, not disgrace the bravest.

Ras. Rise, Samarkoon; I do accept thy thanks,
Since that which I resign is worth——But cease!
Speak not of this—if it be possible,
We'll think of this no more.
(*turning to* Artina.)
And now my only and my noble wife,
And thou, my dauntless boy, stand by my side,
And I, so thank'd, will feel myself in honour,—
Honour which lifts and warms and cheers the heart.
And we shall have a feast within our walls;
Our good De Creda, he will tarry with us;
He will not go to-morrow, as he threaten'd.

Juan. I'll stay with you a day beyond the time,
And then I must depart: a pressing duty
Compels me so to do.

Ras. But thou'lt return again, and bring with thee
The sacred Book which thou hast told me of?

Juan. I will return again and bring that Book,
If Heaven permit. But man's uncertain life
Is like a rain-drop hanging on the bough,
Amongst ten thousand of its sparkling kindred,
The remnants of some passing thunder shower,
Who have their moments, dropping one by one,
And which shall soonest lose its per'lous hold
We cannot guess.——
I, on the Continent, must for a time
A wand'rer be; if I return no more,
You may conclude death has prevented me.

Enter MONTEBESA.

Ras. Ha, mother! welcome, welcome Montebesa!
There; take again your daughter and her boy.
We've striven stoutly with a fearful storm,
But, thanks to good De Creda, it is past:
And all the brighter shall our sky appear,
For that the clouds which have obscured its face,
Were of a denseness dark and terrible.

NOTES.

NOTE I. p. 421.

"*With bleeding limbs drain'd by a hundred leeches.*"

Very small leeches which infest many of the woods of Ceylon, and torment travellers.

NOTE II. p. 423.

——————"*Doombra's mountain ridge Dividing ardent heat from chilling clouds,*" *&c.*

A high mountainous ridge in Ceylon, where the one side is sunny, clear, and warm, the other cloudy, wet, and cold.

NOTE III. p. 425.

"*Ev'n like Niwane when the virtuous soul,*" *&c.*

The final reward of the virtuous after death, according to the Boodhoo religion, is perfect rest or insensibility; and that state, or the region in which it takes place, is called Niwane.

NOTE IV. p. 430.

"*When Boodhoo's rays, beneath the noon's blue dome,*" *&c.*

Bright rays which appear in the middle of the day, surpassing the brightness of the sun, and are supposed to foretel evil.

NOTE V. p. 432.

"*Oh Kattragam, terrific deity!*" *&c.*

The name of the Cingalese Spirit of Evil, or God of Destruction.

PREFACE TO THE MARTYR.

Of all the principles of human action, Religion is the strongest. It is often, indeed, overcome by others, and even by those which may be considered as very weak antagonists; yet, on great emergencies it surmounts them all, and it is master of them all for general and continued operation. In every country and nation, under some form or other, though often dark and distorted, it holds warfare with vice and immorality; either by destroying corrupted selfishness, or by rendering it tributary. And dear and intolerable to the feelings of nature are the tributes it will voluntarily offer,—fasting, scourging, wounds and humiliation;—the humiliation of all worldly distinction, when the light of reason as well as the robe of dignity are thrown aside. A great philosophical writer* of our own days, after having mentioned some of the sceptical works of Hume, says, "Should not rather the melancholy histories which he has exhibited of the follies and caprices of superstition, direct our attention to those sacred and indelible characters of the human mind, which all these perversions of reason are unable to obliterate—? * * * * In truth, the more striking the contradictions, and the more ludicrous the ceremonies, to which the pride of human reason has thus been reconciled, the stronger is our evidence that Religion has a foundation in the nature of man. * * * * * * * * Where are those truths, in the whole circle of the sciences, which are so essential to human happiness, as to procure an easy access, not only for themselves, but for whatever opinions may happen to be blended with them? Where are the truths so venerable and commanding, as to impart their own sublimity to every mode of expression by which they are conveyed; and which, in whatever scene they have habitually occupied the thoughts, consecrate every object which it presents to our senses, and the very ground we have been accustomed to tread? To attempt to weaken the authority of such impressions, by a detail of the endless variety of forms which they derive from casual association, is surely an employment unsuitable to the dignity of philosophy. To the vulgar it may be amusing in this as in other instances, to indulge their wonder at what is new or uncommon; but to the philosopher it belongs to perceive, under all these various disguises, the workings of the same common nature; and in the superstitions of Egypt no less than in the lofty visions of Plato, to recognize the existence of those moral ties which unite the heart of man to the Author of his being."

Many various circumstances, which it suits not my present purpose to mention, have produced this combination of gloomy, cruel, and absurd superstitions with Religion, even in nations and eras possessing much refinement of literature and perfection of the arts. But Religion, when more happily situated, grows from a principle into an affection,—an exalted, adoring devotion; and is then to be regarded as the greatest and noblest emotion of the heart. Considering it in this light, I have ventured, with diffidence and awe, to make it the subject of the following Drama.

The Martyr, whom I have endeavoured to pourtray, is of a class which I believe to have been very rare, except in the first ages of Christianity. There have been many Martyrs in the world. Some have sacrificed their lives for the cause of Reformation in the Church, with the zeal and benevolence of patriotism: some for the maintenance of its ancient doctrines and rites, with the courage of soldiers in the breach of their beleaguered city: some for intricate points of doctrine, with the fire of controvertists, and the honour of men who disdained to compromise what they believed to be the truth, or under impressions of conscience which they durst not disobey; but, from the pure devoted love of God, as the great Creator and benevolent Parent of men, few have suffered but when Christianity was in its simplest and most perfect state, and more immediately contrasted with the mean, cheerless conceptions and popular fables of Paganism.

We may well imagine that, compared to the heathen deities, those partial patrons of nations and individuals, at discord amongst themselves, and invested with the passions and frailties of men, the great and holy God, Father of all mankind, as revealed in the Christian Faith, must have been an idea most elevating, delightful, and consonant to every thing noble and generous in the human understanding or heart. Even to those who, from the opinions of their greatest philosophers, had soared above vulgar belief to one universal God, removed in his greatness from all care or concern for his creatures, the character of the Almighty God and beneficent Parent joined, who cares for the meanest of his works, must have been most animating and sublime, supposing them to be at the same time unwarped by the toils and pride of learning.

But when the life and character of Jesus Christ, so different from every character that

* Stewart's Elements of the Philosophy of the Human Mind, vol. i. p. 368.

had ever appeared upon earth, was unfolded to them as the Son, and sent of God,—sent from heaven to declare his will on earth, and with the love of an elder brother, to win us on to the attainment of an exalted state of happiness, which we had forfeited,—sent to suffer and intercede for benighted wanderers, who were outcasts from their Father's house; can we conceive mingled feelings of gratitude, adoration, and love, more fervent, and more powerfully commanding the soul and imagination of man, than those which must then have been excited by this primitive promulgation of the Gospel? Such converts, too, were called from the uncertain hope (if hope it might be termed) of a dreary, listless, inactive existence after death, so little desirable, that their greatest poet makes his noblest hero declare, he would prefer being the meanest hind who breathes the upper air, to the highest honours of that dismal state.

"Through the thick gloom his friend Achilles knew,
And as he speaks the tears descend in dew;
Com'st thou alive to view the Stygian bounds,
Where the wan spectres walk eternal rounds;
Nor fear'st the dark and dismal waste to tread,
Throng'd with pale ghosts, familiar with the dead?
To whom with sighs: I pass these dreadful gates
To seek the Theban, and consult the fates:
For still distress'd I roam from coast to coast,
Lost to my friends, and to my country lost.
But sure the eye of time beholds no name
So bless'd as thine in all the rolls of fame;
Alive we hail'd thee with our guardian gods,
And dead, thou rul'st a king in these abodes.
Talk not of ruling in this dolorous gloom,
Nor think vain words (he cried) can ease my doom;
Rather I'd choose laboriously to bear
A weight of woes, and breathe the vital air,
A slave to some poor hind that toils for bread,
Than reign the scepter'd monarch of the dead."*

They were called, I repeat it, from hopes like these to the assurance of a future life, so joyful, active, spiritual and glorious, that the present faded in the imagination from before it as a shadow. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart, the joy that is prepared for those who love God," is one of the many expressions of the Christian apostles on this lofty theme; who counted the greatest happiness of the present life as unworthy to be compared to the rewards of the righteous after death, where, according to their different degrees of worth, unsullied with any feeling of envy, they should shine in their blessedness as one star differeth from another star in glory. A transition from prospects so mean and depressing as the former to hopes so dignified, spiritual and animating as the latter, might well have a power over the mind which nothing could shake or subdue; and this transition none but the first race of Christians could experience, at least in so great a degree.

And those enlarged conceptions, those ennobling and invigorating hopes came to them in the pure simplicity of the Gospel as taught by Christ and his apostles. They had no subtile points of faith mixed with them as matters of necessary belief, which the fathers of succeeding times, and too often the pious missionaries of the present, have pressed upon their bewildered converts with greater perseverance and earnestness than the general precepts and hopes of Christianity.* Those ancient converts also had before their eyes a testimony of heroic endurance which till then had been unknown to the world. Who, in preceding times, had given his body to the flames for his belief in any religious notions, taught or entertained by the learned or unlearned? It was a thing hitherto unknown to the heathens; and it is not very marvellous that abstract doctrines of philosophers, taught to their disciples as such, or popular deities, many in number, and of local, limited power, with moral attributes ascribed to them inferior to those of a virtuous mortal man, should be little calculated to raise those strong excitements in the mind, from which religious persecutions did at first proceed amongst Christians, who, from intemperate zeal and narrow conceptions, deemed a right belief in every doctrine of the Church necessary to salvation. Diana of the Ephesians could peaceably hold her state in conjunction with any god or goddess of Greece, Scythia, Persia, or Egypt; but this toleration which proceeded from any cause rather than the excellence of their religion, was changed into the most bloody and ferocious persecutions upon the divulging of a

* Pope's Odyssey, 11th book.

* Dr. Samuel Clarke, in a sermon on the Powers and Wisdom of the Gospel, hath this passage: "And whereas the best and greatest philosophers were in continual disputes, and in many degrees of uncertainty, concerning the very fundamentals and most important doctrines of truth and reason, amongst those, on the contrary, who embraced the Gospel of Christ, there never was the least room for dispute about any fundamental; all Christians at all times and in all places having ever been baptized into the profession of the same faith and into an obligation to obey the same commandments. And it being notorious that all the contentions that ever arose in the Christian world have been merely about several additions which every sect and party, in direct contradiction to the express command of their Master, have endeavoured presumptuously to annex by their own authority to his doctrines and to his laws. How much, therefore, and how just ground soever has been given by those who call themselves Christians to the reproach of them which are without, yet Christ himself, that is, the Gospel in its native simplicity as delivered by him, has abundantly to all reasonable persons among the Gentiles manifested itself to be the wisdom of God; as well as it appeared to be the power of God in signs and wonders to the Jews."
—Clarke's Sermons, vol. v. Serm. 12th.

faith which was altogether incompatible with their theologies, and must therefore, should it prevail, overturn them entirely. Under these circumstances, the most enlightened Pagans, whose toleration has so often been praised, became the first persecutors, and Christians, the first martyrs. And then it was that a new spectacle was exhibited to mankind; then it was that the sublimity of man's immortal soul shone forth in glory which seemed supernatural. Men and women, young and old, suffered for their faith all that flesh and blood can suffer; yea, joyfully and triumphantly.

In beholding such terrific and interesting spectacles, many were led to inquire into the cause of such super-human resolution, and became converts and martyrs in their turn; and it will be found, in the accounts of those ancient persecutions, that many Roman soldiers, and sometimes officers of high rank, were amongst the earlier Christians who laid down their lives for their religion. It was indeed natural that the invincible fortitude of those holy sufferers, fronting death with such noble intrepidity, should attract the admiration and sympathy of the generous and brave, whose pride it was to meet death undauntedly in a less terrific form; and we may easily imagine also, that a generous and elevated mind, under the immediate pressure of such odious tyranny as some of the Roman emperors exercised on their senators and courtiers, would turn from this humiliating bondage to that promise of a Father's house in which there are many mansions, and turn to it with most longing and earnest aspirations. The brave man, bred in the camp and the field, encompassed with hardships and dangers, would be little encumbered with learning or philosophy, therefore more open to conviction; and when returned from the scenes of his distant warfare, would more indignantly submit to the capricious will of a voluptuous master. These considerations have led me to the choice of my hero, and have warranted me in representing him as a noble Roman soldier:—one whose mind is filled with adoring awe and admiration of the sublime, but parental character of the Deity, which is for the first time unfolded to him by the early teachers of Christianity;—one whose heart is attracted by the beautiful purity, refinement, and benignant tenderness, and by the ineffable generosity of him who visited earth as his commissioned Son,--attracted powerfully, with that ardour of affectionate admiration which binds a devoted follower to his glorious chief.

But though we may well suppose unlearned soldiers to be the most unprejudiced and ardent of the early Christian proselytes, we have good reason to believe that the most enlightened minds of those days might be strongly moved and attracted by the first view of Christianity in its pure, uncorrupted state. All their previous notions of religion, as has been already said, whether drawn from a popular or philosophical source, were poor and heartless compared to this. Their ideas on the subject, which I have already quoted, having passed through the thoughts and imagination of their greatest poet, could surely contract no meanness nor frigidity there, but must be considered as represented in the most favourable light which their received belief could possibly admit. We must place ourselves in the real situation of those men, previous to their knowledge of the sacred Scripture, and not take it for granted that those elevated conceptions of the Supreme Being and his paternal Providence which modern deists have in fact, though unwilling to own it, received from the Christian revelation, belonged to them. It has been observed by an author, whose name I ought not to have forgotten, that the ideas of the Deity expressed in the writings of philosophers, subsequently to the Christian era, are more clear and sublime than those which are to be found in heathen writers of an earlier period. I therefore represent him also as a Roman, cultivated, contemplative, and refined.

Martyrs of this rank and character were not, I own, mentioned amongst those belonging to the first persecutions under Nero, but in those which followed, during the first and second century of the Christian era, when the stories which had been propagated of the shocking superstitions and wickedness of the sect began to lose their credit. But I conceive myself warranted to take this liberty, as the supposed recentness of the promulgation of the Gospel gives (if I may so express it) a greater degree of zest to the story, and by no means alters the principles and feelings which must have actuated the martyrs, this whole period being still that of pure Christianity unencumbered with many perplexing and contradictory doctrines which followed, when churchmen had leisure to overlay the sacred Scriptures with a multitude of explanatory dissertations, and with perverse, presumptuous ingenuity to explain the plain passages by the obscure, instead of the obscure by the plain.

In this representation of religious devotion in its early primitive state, it has been my desire to keep clear from all fanatical excess which in after times too often expressed itself in the wildest incoherent rhapsodies; the language of a natural delirium, proceeding from a vain endeavour to protract, by forced excitement, the ecstasy of a few short moments, and to make that a continued state of the mind which was intended, by its beneficent Creator, only for its occasional and transient joy. Of this we may be well assured; for if otherwise indulged, it would have rendered men incapable of the duties of social life; those duties which the blessed founder of our religion did so constantly and so earnestly inculcate. That I am too presumptuous in at-

tempting to represent it at all, is a charge, which, if it be brought against me, I ought to bear with meekness; for when it first offered itself to my mind as the subject of a drama, I shrunk from it as a thing too sacred to be displayed in such a form. But in often considering the matter, this impression at last gave way to a strong desire of showing the noblest of all human emotions in a light in which it has but seldom been contemplated; and I trust that through the following pages, whatever defects may be found, and no doubt there are many, want of reverence will not be amongst the number.

I would gladly pass over the lyrical part of the piece without remark, were it not that I fear I may have offended the classical reader, by having put into the mouths of Roman soldiers a hymn in honour of their deities so homely and unpoetical. This too will more likely offend, after the beautiful and splendid effusions on this subject which have been so much and justly admired in a recent drama. But I wished to make them express what I conceived to be the actual feelings and notions of such men regarding the objects of their worship, not the rich descriptive imaginations of a learned and poetical high priest. Besides, had I possessed talents requisite for the successful imitation of such classical affluence, it would scarcely have accorded with the general tenor of the piece, and the simplicity of the hymns of the Christians; I should therefore have injured the general effect, as well as the supposed faithfulness of the particular passage, regarding its description of real characters. It at least appears so to me.

I need scarcely observe to the reader, that the subject of this piece is too sacred, and therefore unfit for the stage. I have endeavoured, however, to give it so much of dramatic effect as to rouse his imagination in perusing it, to a lively representation of the characters, action, and scenes, belonging to the story; and this, if I have succeeded, will remove from it the dryness of a mere dramatic poem. Had I considered it as fit for theatrical exhibition, the reasons that withhold me from publishing my other manuscript plays, would have held good regarding this.

Before I take leave of my reader, I must be permitted to say, that the following Drama has been written for a long time, and read by a few of my friends several years ago. When Mr. Milman's beautiful drama on a similar subject was published, I began to be afraid that, were I to keep it much longer in manuscript, some other poet, in an age so fertile in poetic genius, might offer to the public that which might approach still nearer to the story of my piece, and give it, when published, not only all its own native defects to contend with, but those also arising from the unavoidable flatness of an exhausted subject. I therefore determined to publish it as soon as other duties permitted me, and many have intervened to prevent the accomplishment of my wish. In preparing it for the press, I have felt some degree of scruple in retaining its original title of *The Martyr*, but I could not well give it any other. The public, I hope, and Mr. Milman, I am certain, are sufficiently my friends not to find fault with this circumstance, which has not arisen from presumption.

THE MARTYR: A DRAMA.

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

MEN.

NERO, *Emperor of Rome.*
CORDENIUS MARO, *Officer of the Imperial Guard.*
ORCERES, *a Parthian Prince, visiting Rome.*
SULPICIUS, *a Senator.*
SYLVIUS, *a brave Centurion.*
Roman Pontiff.
Christian Father or Bishop, Christian Brother, &c.
A PAGE, *in the family of* Sulpicius.
Senators, Christians, Soldiers, &c.

WOMEN.

PORTIA, *Daughter of* Sulpicius.
Christian Women.
SCENE, Rome.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—A PRIVATE APARTMENT IN THE HOUSE OF SULPICIUS.

Enter SULPICIUS and ORCERES by opposite sides.

Sul. So soon returned!—I read not in thy face
Aught to encourage or depress my wishes.
How is it, noble friend?
Orc. Ev'n as it was e'er I received my mission.
Cordenius Maro is on public duty;
I have not seen him.—When he knows your offer
His heart will bound with joy, like eaglet plum'd
Whose out-stretch'd pinions wheeling round and round,
Shape their first circles in the sunny air.
Sul. And with good cause.
Orc. Methinks I see him now!
A face with blushes mantling to the brow,
Eyes with bright tears surcharged, and parted lips
Quiv'ring to utter joy which hath no words.
Sul. His face, indeed, as I have heard thee say,
Is like a wave which sun and shadow cross;
Each thought makes there its momentary mark.
Orc. And then his towering form, and vaulting step,
As tenderness gives way to exultation!
O it had been a feast to look upon him;
And still shall be.
Sul. Art thou so well convinced—
He loves my little damsel?—She is fair,
But seems to me too simple, gay, and thoughtless,
For noble Maro. Heiress as she is
To all my wealth, had I suspected sooner,
That he had smother'd wishes in his breast
As too presumptuous, or that she in secret
Preferr'd his silent homage to the praise
Of any other man, I had most frankly
Removed all hindrance to so fair a suit.
For, in these changeling and degenerate days,
I scarcely know a man of nobler worth.
Orc. Thou scarcely know'st! Say certainly thou dost not.
He is, to honest right, as simply true
As shepherd child on desert pasture bred,
Where falsehood and deceit have never been;
And to maintain them, ardent, skilful, potent,
As the shrewd leader of unruly tribes.
A simple heart and subtle spirit join'd,
Make such an union as in Nero's court
May pass for curious and unnatural.
Sul. But is the public duty very urgent,
That so untowardly delays our happiness?
Orc. The punishment of those poor Nazarenes,
Who, in defiance of imperial power,
To their forbidden faith and rites adhere
With obstinacy most astonishing.
Sul. A stubborn contumacy unaccountable!
Orc. There's sorcery in it, or some stronger power.
But be it what it may, or good or ill,
They look on death in its most dreadful form,
As martial heroes on a wreath of triumph.
The fires are kindled in the place of death,
And bells toll dismally. The life of Rome
In one vast clust'ring mass hangs round the spot,
And no one to his neighbour utters word,
But in an alter'd voice; with breath restrain'd,
Like those who speak at midnight near the dead.
Cordenius heads the band that guards the pile;
So station'd, who could speak to him of pleasure?
For it would seem as an ill-omen'd thing.
Sul. Cease; here comes Portia, with a careless face:
She knows not yet the happiness that waits her.
Orc. Who brings she with her thus, as if compell'd
By playful force?
Sul. 'Tis her Numidian Page; a cunning imp,
Who must be wooed to do the thing he's proud of.

Enter PORTIA, dragging SYPHAX after her, speaking as she enters.

Por. Come in, deceitful thing!—I know thee well;
With all thy sly affected bashfulness,
Thou'rt bold enough to sing in Cesar's court,
With the whole senate present, (*to* Orc.) Prince of Parthia,
I knew not you were here; but yet I guess
The song which this sly creature sings so well,
Will please you also.

Orc. How can it fail, fair Portia, so commended?

Sul. What is this boasted lay?

Por. That tune, my father,
Which you so oft have tried to recollect;
But linked with other words, of new device,
That please my fancy well.—Come, sing it, boy!

Sul. Nay, sing it Syphax, be not so abash'd,
If thou art really so.—Begin, begin!
But speak thy words distinctly as thou sing'st,
That I may have their meaning perfectly.

SONG.

The storm is gath'ring far and wide,
You mortal hero must abide.
Power on earth, and power in air,
Falchion's gleam and lightning's glare;
Arrows hurtling thro' the blast;
Stones from flaming meteor cast:
Floods from burthen'd skies are pouring,
O'er mingled strife of battle roaring;
Nature's rage and Demon's ire,
Belt him round with turmoil dire:
Noble hero! earthly wight!
Brace thee bravely for the fight.

And so, indeed, thou tak'st thy stand,
Shield on arm and glaive in hand;
Breast encased in burnish'd steel,
Helm on head, and pike on heel;
And, more than meets the outward eye,
The soul's high-temper'd panoply,
Which every limb for action lightens,
The form dilates, the visage brightens:
Thus art thou, lofty, mortal wight!
Full nobly harness'd for the fight.

Orc. The picture of some very noble hero
These lines pourtray.

Sul. So it should seem; one of the days of old.

Por. And why of olden days? There liveth now
The very man—a man—I mean to say,
There may be found amongst our Roman youth,
One, who in form and feelings may compare
With him whose lofty virtues these few lines
So well describe.

Orc. Thou mean'st the lofty Gorbus.

Por. Out on the noisy braggart! Arms without
He hath, indeed, well burnish'd and well plumed,
But the poor soul, within, is pluck'd and bare,
Like any homely thing.

Orc. Sertorius Galba then?

Por. O, stranger still!
For if he hath no lack of courage, certes,
He hath much lack of grace. Sertorius Galba!

Orc. Perhaps thou mean'st Cordenius Maro, Lady.
Thy cheeks grow scarlet at the very name,
Indignant that I still should err so strangely.

Por. No, not indignant, for thou errest not;
Nor do I blush, albeit thou think'st I do,
To say, there is not of our Romans one,
Whose martial form a truer image gives
Of firm heroic courage.

Sul. Cease, sweet Portia;
He only laughs at thy simplicity.

Orc. Simplicity seen through a harmless wile,
Like to the infant urchin, half concealed
Behind his smiling dam's transparent veil.
The song is not a stranger to mine ear,
Methinks I've heard it, passing thro' those wilds,
Whose groves and caves, if rumour speak the truth,
Are by the Nazarenes or Christians haunted.

Sul. Let it no more be sung within my walls:
A chaunt of their's to bring on pestilence!
Sing it no more. What sounds are those I hear?

Orc. The dismal death-drum and the crowd without.
They are this instant leading past your door
Those wretched Christians to their dreadful doom.

Sul. We'll go and see them pass.
[EXEUNT *hastily* Sulpicius, Orceres.

Por. (*Stopping her ears.*) I cannot look on them, nor hear the sound.
I'll to my chamber.

Page. May not I, I pray,
Look on them as they pass?

Por. No; go not, child:
'Twill frighten thee; it is a horrid sight.

Page. Yet, an it please you, Lady, let me go.

Por. I say it is a horrid, piteous sight,
Thou wilt be frighten'd at it.

Page. Nay, be it e'er so piteous or so horrid,
I have a longing, strong desire to see it.

Por. Go then; there is in this no affectation:
There's all the harden'd cruelty of man
Lodged in that tiny form, child as thou art.
[EXEUNT, *severally.*

SCENE II.—AN OPEN SQUARE WITH BUILDINGS.

Enter CORDENIUS MARO, at the head of his SOLDIERS, who draw up on either side: then enters a long procession of public Functionaries, &c. conducting MARTYRS to the place of Execution, who, as they pass on, sing together in unison: one more noble than the others, walking first.

SONG.

A long farewell to sin and sorrow,
To beam of day and evening shade!
High in glory breaks our morrow,
With light that cannot fade.

While mortal flesh in flame is bleeding,
For humble penitence and love,
Our Brother and our Lord is pleading
At mercy's throne above.

We leave the hated and the hating,
Existence sad in toil and strife;
The great, the good, the brave are waiting
To hail our opening life.

Earth's faded sounds our ears forsaking,
A moment's silence death shall be;
Then, to heaven's jubilee awaking,
Faith ends in victory.

[EXEUNT *Martyrs, &c. &c.* Cordenius *with his Officers and Soldiers still remaining; the Officers on the front, and* Cordenius *apart from them in a thoughtful posture.*

First Offi. Brave Varus marches boldly at the head
Of that deluded band.

Second Offi. Are these the men, who hateful orgies hold
In dens and deserts, courting, with enchantments,
The intercourse of demons?

Third Offi. Aye, With rites
Cruel and wild. To crucify a babe;
And, while it yet hangs shrieking on the rood,
Fall down and worship it! device abominable!

First Offi. Dost thou believe it?

Third Offi. I can believe or this or any thing
Of the possess'd and mad.

First Offi. What demonry, thinkest thou, possesses Varus?

Second Offi. That is well urged. (*to the other.*) Is he a maniac?
Alas, that I should see so brave a soldier
Thus, as a malefactor, led to death!

First Offi. Viewing his keen enliven'd countenance
And stately step, one should have rather guess'd
He led victorious soldiers to the charge:
And they, indeed, appear to follow him
With noble confidence.

Third Offi. 'Tis all vain seeming.
He is a man, who makes a show of valour
To which his deeds have borne slight testimony.

Cor. (*advancing indignantly.*) Thou liest; a better and a braver soldier
Ne'er fronted foe, or closed in bloody strife.
(*Turning away angrily to the back ground.*)

First Offi. Our chief, methinks, is in a fretful mood,
Which is not usual with him.

Second Offi. He did not seem to listen to our words.
But see he gives the signal to proceed;
We must advance, and with our closing ranks
The fatal pile encircle.

[EXEUNT *in order, whilst a chorus of Martyrs is heard at a distance.*

SCENE III.—AN APARTMENT IN A PRIVATE HOUSE.

Enter two CHRISTIAN WOMEN, by opposite sides.

First Wom. Hast thou heard any thing?

Second Wom. Nought, save the murmur of the multitude,
Sinking at times to deep and awful silence,
From which again a sudden burst will rise
Like mingled exclamations, as of horror
Or admiration. In these neighbouring streets
I have not met a single citizen,
The town appearing uninhabited.
But wherefore art thou here? Thou should'st have stayed
With the unhappy mother of poor Cælus.

First Wom. She sent me hither in her agony
Of fear and fearful hope.

Second Wom. Ha! does she hope deliverance from death?

First Wom. O no! thou wrong'st her, friend; it is not that:
Deliverance is her fear, and death her hope.
A second time she bears a mother's throes
For her young stripling, whose exalted birth
To endless life is at this fearful crisis,
Or earned or lost. May Heaven forfend the last!
He is a timid youth, and soft of nature:
God grant him strength to bear that fearful proof!

Second Wom. Here comes our reverend father.

Enter a CHRISTIAN FATHER.

What tidings dost thou bring? are they in bliss?

Fath. Yes, daughter, as I trust, they are ere this
In high immortal bliss. Cælus alone—

First Wom. He hath apostatized! O woe is me!
O woe is me for his most wretched mother!

Fath. Apostatized! No; stripling as he is,
His fortitude, where all were braced and brave,
Shone paramount.
For his soft downy cheek and slender form
Made them conceive they might subdue his firmness,
Therefore he was reserved till noble Varus
And his compeers had in the flames expired.
Then did they court and tempt him with fair promise
Of all that earthly pleasure or ambition
Can offer, to deny his holy faith.
But he, who seem'd before so meek and timid,
Now suddenly embued with holy grace,
Like the transition of some watery cloud
In passing o'er the moon's refulgent disc,
Glowed with new life; and from his fervid tongue
Words of most firm indignant constancy

Pour'd eloquently forth; then to the pile
Sprung lightly up, like an undaunted warrior
Scaling the breach of honour; or, alas!
As I have seen him midst his boyish mates,
Vaulting aloft for every love of motion.

First Wom. High Heaven be praised for this!—Thine eyes beheld it?

Fath. I saw it not: the friend who witness'd it,
Left him yet living midst devouring flame;
Therefore I spoke of Cælus doubtfully,
If he as yet belong'd to earth or heaven.

(*They cover their faces, and remain silent.*)

Enter a CHRISTIAN BROTHER.

Broth. Lift up your heads, my sisters! let your voices
In grateful thanks be rais'd! Those ye lament,
Have earthly pangs for heavenly joy exchanged.
The manly Varus and the youthful Cælus,
The lion and the dove, yoke-fellows link'd,
Have equal bliss and equal honour gain'd.

First Wom. And prais'd be God, who makes the weakest strong!
I'll to his mother with the blessed tidings
[EXIT.

Fath. Let us retire and pray. How soon our lives
May have like ending, God alone doth know!
O! may like grace support us in our need!
[EXEUNT.

SCENE IV.—AN OPEN SPACE IN FRONT OF A TEMPLE.

Enter CORDENIUS, as returning from the Execution with his SOLDIERS, who, upon a signal from him, disperse and leave him alone. He walks a few paces slowly, then stops and continues for a short time in a thoughtful posture.

Cor. There is some power in this, or good or ill,
Surpassing nature. When the soul is roused
To desp'rate sacrifice, 'tis ardent passion,
Or high exalted virtue that excites it.
Can loathsome demonry in dauntless bearing,
Outdo the motives of the lofty brave?
It cannot be! There is some power in this
Mocking all thought—incomprehensible.

(*Remains for a moment silent and thoughtful, while* Sylvius *enters behind him unperceived.*)

Delusion! ay, 'tis said the cheated sight
Will see unreal things; the cheated ear
List to sweet sounds that are not; even the reason
Maintain conclusions wild and inconsistent.
We hear of this:—the weak may be deluded;
But is the learn'd, th' enlighten'd, noble Varus
The victim of delusion?—Can it be?
I'll not believe it.

Syl. (*advancing to him.*) No, believe it not.

Cor. (*starting.*) Ha! one so near me!
I have seen thy face before; but where?—who art thou?

Syl. Ev'n that Centurion of the Seventh Legion,
Who, with Cordenius Maro, at the siege
Of Fort *Volundum*, mounted first the breach;
And kept the clust'ring enemy in check,
Till our encouraged Romans followed us.

Cor. My old companion then, the valiant Sylvius.
Thou'st done hard service since I saw thee last:
Thy countenance is mark'd with graver lines
Than in those greener days: I knew thee not.
Where goest thou now? I'll bear thee company.

Syl. I thank thee: yet thou may'st not go with me.
The way that I am wending suits not thee,
Tho' suiting well the noble and the brave.
It were not well, in fiery times like these,
To tempt thy generous mind.

Cor. What dost thou mean?

Syl. (*after looking cautiously round to see that nobody is near.*) Did I not hear thee commune with thyself
Of that most blessed Martyr gone to rest,
Varus Dobella?

Cor. How blessed? My unsettled thoughts were busy
With things mysterious; with those magic powers
That work the mind to darkness and destruction;
With the sad end of the *deluded* Varus.

Syl. Not so, not so! The wisest prince on earth,
With treasured wealth and armies at command,
Ne'er earn'd withal such lofty exaltation
As Varus now enjoys.

Cor. Thy words amaze me, friend; what is their meaning?

Syl. They cannot be explain'd with hasty speech
In such a place. If thou would'st really know—
And may such light———

Cor. Why dost thou check thy words,
And look so much disturb'd, like one in doubt?

Syl. What am I doing! Zeal, perhaps, betrays me.
Yet, wherefore hide salvation from a man
Who is so worthy of it?

Cor. Why art thou agitated thus? What moves thee?

Syl. And would'st thou really know it?

Cor. Dost thou doubt me?
I have an earnest, most intense desire.

Syl. Sent to thy heart, brave Roman, by a Power
Which I may not resist. (*Bowing his head.*)
But go not with me now in open day.
At fall of eve, I'll meet thee in the suburb,
Close to the pleasure-garden of Sulpitius;
Where in a bushy crevice of the rock
There is an entry to the catacombs,
Known but to few.

Cor. Ha! to the catacombs!

Syl. A dismal place, I own, but heed not that;
For there thou'lt learn what, to thy ardent mind,
Will make this world but as a thorny pass
To regions of delight; man's natural life
With all its varied turmoil of ambition,
But as the training of a wayward child
To manly excellence; yea, death itself
But as a painful birth to life unending.
The word eternal has not to thine ears,
As yet, its awful, ample sense conveyed.
Cor. Something possesses thee.
Syl. Yes, noble Maro;
But it is something which can ne'er possess
A mind that is not virtuous.—Let us part;
It is expedient now.—All good be with thee!
Cor. And good be with thee, also, valiant soldier!
Syl. (*returning as he is about to go out.*) At close of day, and near the pleasure-garden,—
The garden of Sulpitius.
Cor. I know the spot, and will not fail to meet thee. [EXEUNT.

ACT II.

SCENE I.—THE CATACOMBS, SHOWING LONG LOW-ROOFED AISLES, IN DIFFERENT DIRECTIONS, SUPPORTED BY THICK PILLARS OF THE ROUGH UNHEWN ROCK, WITH RUDE TOMBS AND HEAPS OF HUMAN BONES, AND THE WALLS IN MANY PLACES LINED WITH HUMAN SKULLS.

Enter CORDENIUS MARO, speaking to a CHRISTIAN FATHER, on whose arm he leans, and followed by SYLVIUS.

Cor. One day and two bless'd nights, spent in acquiring
Your heavenly lore, so powerful and sublime,—
Oh! what an altered creature they have made me!
Fath. Yes, gentle son, I trust that thou art altered.
Cor. I am, methinks, like one, who, with bent back
And downward gaze—if such a one might be—
Hath only known the boundless azure sky
By the strait circle of reflected beauty,
Seen in the watery gleam of some deep pit,
Till of a sudden roused, he stands erect,
And wondering looks aloft and all around
On the bright sunny firmament:—like one
(Granting again that such a one might be,)
Who hath but seen the element of fire
On household hearth or woodman's smoky pile,
And looks at once, midst stounding thunder-peals,
On Jove's magnificence of lightning.—Pardon,
I pray you pardon me! I mean *his* lightning,
Who is the Jove of Jove, the great Jehova.
Fath. (*smiling.*) Be not disturb'd, my son; the lips will utter,
From lengthen'd habit, what the mind rejects.
Cor. These blessed hours which I have pass'd with you
Have to my intellectual being given
New feelings and expansion, like to that
Which once I felt, on viewing by degrees
The wide developement of nature's amplitude.
Fath. And how was that, my son?
Cor. I well remember it; even at this moment
Imagination sees it all again.
'Twas on a lofty mountain of Armenia,
O'er which I led by night my martial cohort,
To shun the fierce heat of a summer's day.
Close round us hung, the vapours of the night
Had formed woofy curtain, dim and pale,
Through which the waning moon did faintly mark
Its slender crescent.
Fath. Ay, the waned moon thro' midnight vapours seen,
Fit emblem is of that retrenching light,
Dubious and dim, which to the earliest Patriarchs
Was at the first vouchsafed; a moral guide,
Soon clouded and obscured to their descendants,
Who peopled far and wide, in scattered tribes,
The fertile earth.—But this is interruption.
Proceed, my son.
Cor. Well, on the lofty summit
We halted, and the day's returning light
On this exalted station found us. Then
Our brighten'd curtain, wearing into shreds
And rifted masses, through its opening gave
Glimpse after glimpse of slow revealed beauty,
Which held th' arrested senses magic bound,
In the intensity of charm'd attention.
Fath. From such an eminence, the op'ning mist
Would to the eye reveal most beauteous visions.
Cor. First, far beneath us, woody peaks appear'd,
And knolls with cedars crested; then, beyond,
And lower still, the herdsmen's cluster'd dwellings,
With pasture slopes, and flocks just visible;
Then, further still, soft wavy wastes of forest,
In all the varied tints of sylvan verdure,
Descending to the plain; then wide and boundless
The plain itself, with towns and cultured tracks,
And its fair river gleaming in the light,
With all its sweepy windings, seen and lost,
And seen again, till thro' the pale grey tint
Of distant space, it seem'd a loosen'd cestus
From virgin's tunic blown; and still beyond,
The earth's extended vastness from the sight,
Wore like the boundless ocean.
My heart beat rapidly at the fair sight—

This ample earth, man's natural habitation.
But now, when to my mental eye reveal'd,
His moral destiny, so grand and noble,
Lies stretching on even to immensity,
It overwhelms me with a flood of thoughts,
Of happy thoughts.

Fath. Thanks be to God that thou dost feel it so!

Cor. I am most thankful for the words of power
Which from thy gifted lips and sacred Scripture
I have received. What feelings they have raised!
O what a range of thought given to the mind!
And to the soul what loftiness of hope!
That future dreamy state of faint existence
Which poets have described and sages taught,
In which the brave and virtuous pined and droop'd
In useless indolence, changed for a state
Of social love, and joy, and active bliss,—
A state of brotherhood,—a state of virtue,
So grand, so purified;—O, it is excellent!
My soul is roused within me at the sound,
Like some poor slave, who from a dungeon issues
To range with free-born men his native land.

Fath. Thou may'st, indeed, my son, redeem'd from thraldom,
Become the high compeer of blessed spirits.

Cor. The high compeer of such!—These gushing tears,
Nature's mysterious tears, will have their way.

Fath. To give thy heart relief.

Cor. And yet mysterious. Why do we weep
At contemplation of exalted virtue?
Perhaps in token of the fallen state
In which we are, as thrilling sympathy
Strangely acknowledges some sight and sound,
Connected with a dear and distant home,
Albeit the mem'ry hath that link forgotten:—
A kind of latent sense of what we were
Or might have been; a deep mysterious token.

Fath. Perhaps thou'rt right, my son; for even the wicked
Will sometimes weep at lofty, generous deeds.
Some broken traces of our noble nature
Were yet preserved; therefore our great Creator
Still loved his work, and thought it worth redemption.
And therefore his bless'd Son, our generous Master,
Did, as the elder brother of that race,
Whose form he took, lay down his life to save us.
But I have read thee, in our sacred Book,
His gentle words of love.

Cor. Thou hast! thou hast! they're stirring in my heart:
Each fibre of my body thrills in answer
To the high call.—

Fath. The Spirit of Power, my son, is dealing with thee.

Cor. (*after a pause.*) One thing amazes me, yet it is excellent.

Fath. And what amazes thee? Unbosom freely
What passes in thy mind.

Cor. That this religion which dilates our thoughts
Of God Supreme to an infinity
Of awful greatness, yet connects us with him,
As children, loved and cherish'd;—
Adoring awe with tenderness united.

Syl. (*eagerly.*) Ay, brave Cordenius, that same thought more moved
My rude unletter'd mind than all the rest.
I struck my hand against my soldier's mail,
And cried, "This faith is worthy of a man!"

Cor. Our best philosophers have raised their thoughts
To one great universal Lord of all,
rd even of Jove himself and all the gods;
But who durst feel for that high, distant Essence
A warmer sentiment than deep submission?
But now, adoring love and grateful confidence
Cling to th' infinity of power and goodness,
As the repentant child turns to his sire
With yearning looks that say, "Am I not thine?"
I am too bold: I should be humbled first
In penitence and sorrow, for the stains
Of many a hateful vice and secret passion.

Fath. Check not the generous tenour of thy thoughts:
O check it not! Love leads to penitence,
And is the noblest, surest path; whilst fear
Is dark and devious. To thy home return,
And let thy mind well weigh what thou hast heard.
If then thou feel'st within thee, faith assured;
That faith, which may, even through devouring flames,
Its passage hold to heaven, baptismal rites
Shall give thee entrance to a purer life,
Receive thee, as thy Saviour's valiant soldier,
For his high warfare arm'd.

Cor. I am resolved, and feel that in my heart
There lives that faith; baptize me ere we part.

Fath. So be it then. But yet that holy rite
Must be deferr'd; for lo! our brethren come,
Bearing the ashes of our honour'd saints,
Which must, with hymns of honour be received.

Enter Christians, seen advancing slowly along one of the aisles, and bearing a large veiled urn, which they set down near the front. They then lift off the veil and range themselves round it, while one sings and the rest join in the chorus at the end of each short verse.

SONG.

Departed brothers, generous, brave,
Who for the faith have died,
Nor its pure source denied,
Your bodies from devouring flames to save,

Chorus.

Honour on earth, and bliss in heaven,
Be to your saintly valour given!

And we, who, left behind, pursue
A pilgrim's weary way
To realms of glorious day,
Shall rouse our fainting souls with thoughts of you.

Honour on earth, &c.

Your ashes, mingled with the dust,
Shall yet be forms more fair
Than e'er breathed vital air,
When earth again gives up her precious trust.

Honour on earth, &c.

The trump of angels shall proclaim,
With tones far sent and sweet,
Which countless hosts repeat,
The generous martyr's never-fading name.

Honour on earth, and bliss in heaven,
Be to your saintly valour given!

Cor. (*to* Father.) And ye believe those, who a few hours since
Were clothed in flesh and blood, and here, before us,
Lie thus, ev'n to a few dry ashes changed,
Are now exalted spirits, holding life
With blessed powers, and agencies, and all
Who have on earth a virtuous part fulfill'd?
The dear redeem'd of Godlike love, again
To their primeval destiny restored?
It is a generous, powerful, noble faith.
Syl. Did I not tell thee, as we pass'd along,
It well became a Roman and a soldier?
Fath. Nay, worthy Sylvius, somewhat more of meekness
And less of martial ardour were becoming
In those, whose humble Lord stretch'd forth his hand,
His saving hand, to ev'n the meanest slave
Who bends beneath an early master's rod.
This faith is meet for all of human kind.
Cor. Forgive him, father: see, he stands reproved;
His heart is meek, tho' ardent;
It is, indeed, a faith for all mankind.
Fath. We feel it such, my son, press'd as we are;
On every side beset with threatening terrours.
Look on these ghastly walls, these shapeless pillars,
These heaps of human bones,—this court of death;
Ev'n here, as in a temple, we adore
The Lord of life, and sing our song of hope,
That death has lost his sting, the grave his triumph.
Cor. O make me then the partner of your hopes!
(*Taking the hand of* Sylvius, *and then of several other* Christians.)
Brave men! high destined souls! immortal beings!
The blessed faith and sense of what we are
Comes on my heart, like streams of beamy light
Pour'd from some opening cloud. O to conceive
What lies beyond the dim, dividing veil,
Of regions bright, of blest and glorious being!
Fath. Ay, when it is withdrawn, we shall behold
What heart hath ne'er conceived, nor tongue could utter.
Cor. When but a boy, I've gazed upon the sky,
With all its sparks of light, as a grand cope
For the benighted world. But now my fancy
Will greet each twinkling star, as the bright lamp
Of some fair angel on his guardian watch.
And think ye not, that from their lofty stations,
Our future glorious home, our Father's house,
May lie within the vast and boundless ken
Of such seraphic powers?
Fath. Thy fancy soars on wide and buoyant wings;
Speak on, my son, I would not check thy ardour.
Cor. This solid earth is press'd beneath our feet,
But as a step from which to take our flight,
What boots it then, if rough or smooth it be,
Serving its end?—Come, noble Sylvius!
We've been companions in the broil of battle,
Now be we fellow-soldiers in that warfare
Which best becomes the brave.
Syl. Cordenius Maro, we shall be companions
When this wide earth with all its fields of blood,
Where war hath raged, and all its towers of strength
Which have begirded been with iron hosts,
Are shrunk to nothing, and the flaming sun
Is in his course extinguish'd.
Cor. Come, lead me, father, to the holy fount,
If I in humble penitence may be
From worldly vileness clear'd,
Fath. I gladly will, my son. The spirit of grace
Is dealing with thy spirit: be received,
A ransom'd penitent, to the high fellowship
Of all the good and bless'd in earth and heaven!

Enter a CONVERT.

Whence comest thou, Fearon? Why wert thou prevented
From joining in our last respectful homage
To those, who have so nobly for the truth
Laid down their lives?
Con. I have been watching near the grated dungeon
Where Ethocles, the Grecian, is immured.
Fath. Thou say'st not so! A heavier loss than this,

If they have seiz'd on him, the righteous cause
Could not have suffer'd. Art thou sure of it?
We had not heard of his return from Syria.

Con. It is too true: he landed ten days since
On the Brundusian coast, and as he enter'd
The gates of Rome, was seized and dragg'd to prison.

Fath. And we in utter ignorance of this!

Con. He travell'd late and unaccompanied,
So this was done at night-fall and conceal'd.
But see his writing, given me by a guard,
Who has for pity's sake betray'd his trust:
It is address'd to thee.

(*Giving him a paper.*)

Fath. (*after reading it.*) Alas, alas: it is a brief account
Of his successful labours in the East;
For with his excellent gifts of eloquence,
Learning, and prudence, he has made more converts
Than all our zealous brotherhood besides.
What can we do? He will be sacrificed:
The church in him must bleed, if God so wills.
It is a dreadful blow.

Cor. (*to the* Convert.) I pray thee, in what prison is he kept.

Con. In Sylla's tower, that dwelling of despair.

Cor. Guarded by Romans?

Con. Yes; and strongly guarded.

Cor. Yet, he shall be released.

Fath. (*to* Cordenius.) Beware, my son, of rash, imprudent zeal:
The truth hath suffer'd much from this; beware;
Risk not thyself: thy life is also precious.

Cor. My whole of life is precious; but this shred,
This earthly portion of it, what is that,
But as it is employed in holy acts?
Am I Christ's soldier at a poorer rate
Than I have served an earthly master? No;
I feel within my glowing breast a power
Which says I am commission'd for this service.
Give me thy blessing—thy baptismal blessing,
And then God's spirit guide me! Serving God,
I will not count the cost but to discharge it.

Fath. His will direct thee then, my generous son!
His blessing be upon thee!—Lead him, Sylvius,
To the blest fount, where from his former sins
He shall by heavenly grace be purified.

[EXEUNT.

SCENE II.—THE GARDEN OF SULPICIUS.

Enter SULPICIUS, and PORTIA, with flowers in her hand.

Por. Was it not well to rise with early morn
And pay my homage to sweet Flora? Never
Were flowers by mid-day cull'd so fair, so fragrant,
With blending streaky tints, so fresh and bright.
See; twinkling dew-drops lurk in every bell,
And on the fibred leaves stray far apart,
Like little rounded gems of silver sheen,
Whilst curling tendrils grasp with vigorous hold
The stem that bears them! All looks young and fresh.
The very spider thro' his circled cage
Of wiry woof, amongst the buds suspended,
Scarce seems a lothly thing, but like the small
Imprison'd bird of some capricious nymph.
Is it not so, my father?

Sul. Yes, morn and youth and freshness sweetly join,
And are the emblems of dear changeful days.
By night these beauteous things—

Por. And what of night?
Why do you check your words? You are not sad?

Sul. No, Portia; only angry with myself
For crossing thy gay stream of youthful thoughts
With those of sullen age. Away with them!
What if those bright-leaved flowers, so soft and silken,
Are gathered into dank and wrinkled folds
When evening chills them, or upon the earth
With broken stems and buds torn and dispers'd,
Lie prostrate, of fair form and fragrance reft
When midnight winds pass o'er them; be it so!
All things but have their term.
In truth, my child, I am glad that I indulged thee
By coming forth at such an early hour
To pay thy worship to so sweet a goddess,
Upon her yearly feast.

Por. I thank you, father! On her feast, 'tis said,
That she, from mortal eye conceal'd, vouchsafes
Her presence in such sweet and flowery spots:
And where due offerings on her shrine are laid,
Blesses all seeds and shoots, and things of promise.

Sul. How many places in one little day
She needs must visit then!

Por. But she moves swift as thought. The hasty zephyr,
That stirr'd each slender leaf, now as we enter'd,
And made a sudden sound, by stillness follow'd,
Might be the rustling of her passing robe.

Sul. A pleasing fancy, Portia, for the moment,
Yet wild as pleasing.

Por. Wherefore call it wild?

Full many a time I've listen'd when alone
In such fair spots as this, and thought I heard
Sweet mingled voices uttering varied tones
Of question and reply, pass on the wind,
And heard soft steps upon the ground; and then
The notion of bright Venus or Diana,
Or goddess-nymphs, would come so vividly
Into my mind, that I am almost certain
Their radiant forms were near me, tho' conceal'd
By subtle drapery of the ambient air.
And oh, how I have long'd to look upon them
An ardent strange desire, tho' mix'd with fear.
Nay, do not smile, my father: such fair sights
Were seen—were often seen in ancient days;
The poets tell us so.
But look, the Indian roses I have foster'd
Are in full bloom; and I must gather them!
[Exit *eagerly*.

Sul. (*alone.*) Go, gentle creature, thou art careless yet:
Ah! could'st thou so remain, and still with me
Be as in years gone by!—It may not be;
Nor should I wish it: all things have their season:
She may not now remain an old man's treasure,
With all her woman's beauty grown to blossom.

Enter Orckres.

The Parthian prince at such an early hour?

Orc. And who considers hours, whose heart is bent
On what concerns a lover and a friend?
Where is thy daughter?

Sul. Within yon flowery thicket, blythe and careless;
For tho' she loves, 'tis with sweet, maiden fancy,
Which, not impatient, looks in cheering hope
To future years.

Orc. Ay, 'tis a shelter'd passion,
A cradled love, by admiration foster'd:
A showy, toward nurse for babe so bashful.
Thus in the shell athwart whose snowy lining
Each changeful tint of the bright rainbow plays,
A little pearl is found, in secret value
Surpassing all the rest.

Sul. But sayest thou nothing
Of what I wish to hear? What of Cordenius?

Orc. By my good war-bow and its barbed shafts!
By the best war-horse archer e'er bestrode!
I'm still in ignorance; I have not seen him.

Sul. Thou hast not seen him! this is very strange.

Orc. So it indeed appears.—My wayward friend
Has from his home been absent. Yesterday,
There and elsewhere I sought, but found him not.
This morning by the dawn again I sought him,
Thinking to find him surely, and alone;
But his domestics, much amazed, have told me.
He is not yet return'd.

Sul. Hush! thro' yon thicket I perceive a man.

Orc. Some thief or spy.

Sul. Let us withdraw awhile,
And mark his motions; he observes us not.

Enter Cordenius from a thicket in the back ground.

Cor. (*after looking round him with delight.*)
Sweet light of day, fair sky, and verdant earth,
Enrich'd with every beauteous herb and flower,
And stately trees, that spread their boughs like tents
For shade and shelter, how I hail ye now!
Ye are his works, who made such fair abodes
For happy innocence, yet, in the wreck
Of foul perversion, has not cast us off.
(*Stooping to look at the flowers.*)
Ye little painted things, whose varied hues
Charm, ev'n to wonderment; that mighty hand
Which dyes the mountain's peak with rosy tints
Sent from the rising sun, and to the barbed
Destructive lightning gives its ruddy gleam,
Grand and terrific, thus adorns even you!
There is a Father's full unstinted love
Display'd o'er all, and thus on all I gaze
With the keen thrill of new-waked ecstasy.
What voice is that so near me and so sweet?

(Portia *without, singing some notes of prelude, and then a Song.*)

SONG.

The Lady in her early bower
Is blest as bee in morning flower;
The Lady's eye is flashing bright,
Like water in the morning light;
The Lady's song is sweet and loud,
Like skylark o'er the morning cloud;
The Lady's smiles are smiles that pass
Like morning's breath o'er wavy grass.

She thinks of one, whose harness'd car
In triumph comes from distant war;
She thinks of one, whose martial state
Will darken Rome's imperial gate;
She thinks of one, with laurel crown'd,
Who shall with sweeter wreaths be bound.
Voice, eye, and smiles, in mingled play,
The Lady's happy thoughts betray.

Cor. Her voice indeed, and this my fav'rite song!
It is that gentle creature, my sweet Portia.
I call her mine, because she is the image
Which hath possess'd my fancy. Such vain thoughts
Must now give place. I will not linger here.
This is the garden of Sulpicius;
How have I miss'd my path? She sings again. (*Sings without, as before.*)

She wanders fitfully from lay to lay,
But all of them some air that I have prais'd
In happy hours gone by.

SONG.

The kind heart speaks with words so kindly sweet,
That kindred hearts the catching tones repeat;
And love, therewith his soft sigh gently blending,
Makes pleasing harmony. Thus softly sending
Its passing cheer across the stilly main,
Whilst in the sounding water dips the oar
And glad response bursts from the nearing shore,
Comes to our ears the home-bound seaman's strain,
Who from the lofty deck, hail their own land again.

Cor. O gentle, sweet, and cheerful! form'd to be
Whate'er my heart could prize of treasured love!
Dear as thou art, I will not linger here.

Re-enter SULPICIUS and ORCERES, breaking out upon him, and ORCERES catching hold of his robe as he is going off.

Orc. Ha! noble Maro, to a coward turn'd,
Shunning a spot of danger!
Sul. Stay, Cordenius.
The fellest foe thou shalt contend with here,
Is her thou call'st so gentle. As for me,
I do not offer thee this hand more freely
Than I will grant all that may make thee happy,
If Portia has that power.
Cor. And dost thou mean, in very earnest mean,
That thou wilt give me Portia—thy dear Portia?
My fancy catches wildly at thy words.
Sul. And truly too, Cordenius. She is thine,
If thou wilt promise me to love her truly.
Cor. (*Eagerly clasping the knees, and then kissing the hands of* Sulpicius.) Thanks, thanks!—thanks from my swoln, o'erflowing heart,
Which has no words.—Friend, father, Portia's father!
The thought creates in me such sudden joy
I am bewilder'd with it.
Sul. Calm thy spirits.—
Thou should'st in meeter form have known it sooner,
Had not the execution of those Christians-
(Pests of the earth, whom on one burning pile
With all their kind, I would most gladly punish,)
Till now prevented me. Thy friend, Orceres—
Thou owest him thanks—plead for thee powerfully,
And had my leave. But dost thou listen to me?
Thy face wears many colours, and big drops
Burst from thy brow, whilst thy contract lips
Quiver, like one in pain.

Orc. What sudden illness racks thee?
Cor. I may not tell you now: let me depart.
Sul. (*holding him.*) Thou art my promised son; I have a right
To know whate'er concerns thee,—pain or pleasure.
Cor. And so thou hast, and I may not deceive thee.
Take, take, Sulpicius.—O such with'ring words!
The sinking, sick'ning heart and parched mouth!
I cannot utter them.
Sul. Why in this agony of perturbation?
Nay, strive not now to speak.
Cor. I must, I must!—
Take back thy proffer'd gift; all earth could give;—
That which it cannot give I must retain.
Sul. What words are these? If it were possible,
I could believe thee touch'd with sorcery,
The cursed art of those vile Nazarenes.
Where hast thou past the night? their haunts are near.
Orc. Nay, nay; repress thine anger; noble Maro
May not be questioned thus.
Sul. He may, and shall. And yet I will not urge him,
If he, with hand press'd on his breast, will say,
That he detests those hateful Nazarenes.
Cor. No; tho' my life, and what is dearer far,
My Portia's love, depended on the words,
I would not, and I durst not utter them.
Sul. I see it well: thou art ensnared and blinded
By their enchantments. Demoniac power
Will drag thee to thy ruin. Cast it off;
Defy it. Say thou wilt forbear all intercourse
With this detested sect. Art thou a madman?
Cor. If I am mad, that which possesses me
Outvalues all philosophers e'er taught,
Or poets e'er imagined.—Listen to me.
Call ye these Christians vile, because they suffer
All nature shrinks from, rather than deny
What seems to them the truth? Call ye them sorcerers,
Because their words impart such high conceptions
Of power creative and parental love,
In one great Being join'd, as makes the heart
Bound with ennobling thoughts? Call ye them curst
Who daily live in steady strong assurance
Of endless blessedness? O, listen to me!

Re-enter PORTIA, bursting from a thicket close to them.

Por. O, listen to him, father!
Sul. Let go my robe, fond creature! Listen to him!

The song of syrens were less fatal. Charms
Of dire delusion, luring on to ruin,
Are mingled with the words that speak their faith;
They, who once hear them, flutter round destruction
With giddy fascination, like the moth,
Which, shorn of half its form, all scorch'd and shrivell'd,
Still to the torch returns. I will not listen;
No, Portia, nor shalt thou.

Por. O, say not so!
For if you listen to him, you may save him,
And win him from his errors.

Sul. Vain hope! vain hope! What is man's natural reason
Opposed to demon subtlety? Cordenius!
Cordenius Maro! I adjure thee, go!
Leave me; why would'st thou pull destruction on me?
On one who loved thee so, that tho' possess'd
Of but one precious pearl, most dearly prized,
Prized more than life, yet would have given it to thee.
I needs must weep: ev'n for thyself I weep.

Cor. Weep not, my kind Sulpicius! I will leave thee,
Albeit the pearl thou would'st bestow upon me
Is, in my estimation, dearer far
Than life, or power, or fame, or earthly thing.
When these fierce times are past, thou wilt, perhaps,
Think of me with regard, but not with pity,
How fell soe'er my earthly end hath been,
For I shall then be blest. And thou, dear Portia,
Wilt thou remember me? That thought, alas!
Dissolves my soul in weakness.—
O, to be spared, if it were possible,
This stroke of agony. Is it not possible,
That I might yet——Almighty God forgive me!
Weak thoughts will lurk in the devoted heart,
But not be cherish'd there. I may not offer
Aught short of all to thee.——
Farewell, farewell! sweet Portia, fare thee well!
(Orceres *catches hold of him to prevent his going.*)
Retain me not: I am a Parthian now,
My strength is in retreat. [Exit.

Por. That noble mind! and must it then be ruin'd?
O save him, save him, father! Brave Orceres,
Wilt thou not save thy friend, the noble Maro?

Orc. We will, sweet maid, if it be possible.
We'll keep his faith a secret in our breasts;
And he may yet, if not by circumstances
Provok'd to speak, conceal it from the world.

Por. And you, my father?

Sul. I will not betray him.

Por. Then all may yet be well; for our great gods,
Whom Cæsar and his subject-nations worship,
Will not abandon Rome's best, bravest soldier
To power demoniac. That can never be,
If they indeed regard us.

Orc. Were he in Parthia, our great god, the sun,
Or rather he who in that star resides,
Would not permit his power to be so thwarted,
For all the demonry that e'er exerted
Its baleful influence on wretched men.
Beshrew me! for a thought gleams thro' my brain,
It is this God, perhaps, with some new name,
Which these bewilder'd Nazarenes adore.

Sul. With impious rites, most strange and horrible.

Orc. If he, my friend, in impious rites hath join'd,
Demons, indeed, have o'er the soul of man
A power to change its nature. Ay, Sulpicius;
And thou and I may, ere a day shall pass,
Be very Nazarenes. We are in ignorance;
We shoot our arrow in the dark, and cry,
'It is to wound a foe.' Come, gentle Portia;
Be not so sad; the man thou lovest is virtuous,
And brave, and loves thee well; why then despair?

Por. Alas! I know he is brave and virtuous,
Therefore, I do despair.

Orc. In Nero's court, indeed,
Such men are ever on the brink of danger,
But would'st thou have him other than he is?

Por. O no! I would not; that were base and sordid;
Yet shed I tears, even like a wayward child
Who weeps for that which cannot be attain'd,—
Virtue, and constancy, and safety join'd.
I pray thee pardon me, for I am wretched,
And that doth make me foolish and perverse.
[Exeunt.

ACT III.

Scene I.—Before the gate of Nero's palace: guards with their officers, discovered on duty.

Enter to them another Officer, speaking as he enters to the Soldiers.

First Offi. Strike up some sacred strain of Roman triumph;
The Pontiff comes to meet the summon'd council.
Omit not this respect, else he will deem
We are of those who love the Nazarenes.
Sing loud and clearly.

Enter Pontiff attended.

SACRED HYMN *by the Soldiers.*

That chief, who bends to Jove the suppliant knee,
Shall firm in power and high in honour be;

And who to Mars a soldier's homage yields,
Shall laurell'd glory reap in bloody fields;
Who vine-crown'd Bacchus, bounteous Lord adores,
Shall gather still, unscath'd, his vintage stores
Who to fair Venus lib'ral off'ring gives,
Enrich'd with love, and sweet affection lives.
Then, be your praises still our sacred theme,
O Venus, Bacchus, Mars, and Jove supreme!

Pon. I thank ye, soldiers! Rome, indeed, hath triumph'd,
Bless'd in the high protection of her gods,
The sov'reign warrior-nation of the world;
And, favour'd by great Jove and mighty Mars,
So may she triumph still, nor meanly stoop
To worship strange and meaner deities,
Adverse to warlike glory.
[Exit, *with his train.*

First Offi. The Pontiff seems disturb'd, his brow is lowering.

Second Offi. Reproof and caution, mingled with his thanks,
Tho' utter'd graciously.

First Offi. He is offended,
Because of late so many valiant soldiers
Have proselytes become to this new worship;
A worship too, as he insinuates,
Unsuited to the brave.

Third Offi. Ay, ay! the sacred chickens are in danger.

Second Offi. Sylvius is suspected, as I hear.

First Offi. Hush! let us to our duty; it is time
To change the inner guard.
[Exeunt *with music, into the gate of the palace.*

Scene II.—A council chamber in the palace, Nero with his counsellors discovered; Nero in the act of speaking.

Nero. Yes, Servius; formerly we have admitted,
As minor powers, amongst the ancient gods
Of high imperial Rome, the foreign deities
Of friendly nations; but these Nazarenes
Scorn such association, proudly claiming
For that which is the object of their faith,
Sole, undivided homage: and our altars,
Our stately temples, the majestic forms
Of Mars, Apollo, thund'ring Jove himself,
By sculptor's art divine, so nobly wrought,
Are held by these mad zealots in contempt.
Examine, sayest thou! shall imperial Cæsar
Deign to examine what withstands his power?
I marvel at thy folly, Servius Sillus.

Enter an Officer.

Offi. The Pontiff, mighty Cæsar, waits without,
And craves admittance.

Nero. Let him be admitted.

Enter Pontiff.

Pontiff, thy visage, if I read it well,
Says, that some weighty matter brings thee here:
Thou hast our leave to speak.

Pon. Imperial Nero, did'st thou not condemn
That eloquent, but pestilential Nazarene,
The Grecian Ethocles, whose specious words
Wrap in delusion all who listen to him,
Spreading his baleful errors o'er the world?

Nero. Did I condemn him! Ev'n this very day,
He in the Amphitheatre meets his doom;
Having, I trust, no power of words to charm
The enchafed lion, or the famish'd wolf.

Pon. I am inform'd, and I believe it true,
That this bold malefactor is enlarged.

Nero. It is impossible! Cordenius Maro
Is sworn to guard the prisoner; or, failing,
(How could he fail?) to pay with his own life
The forfeit. But behold his fav'rite friend,

Enter Orceres, followed by Sulpicius.

The Parthian Prince, who will inform us truly.
Orceres, is thy friend Cordenius coming?
I have commanded him, and at this hour,
To bring his guarded prisoner to the palace,
Here to remain till the appointed time.

Orc. I know not; nor have I beheld Cordenius
Since yesterday; when, at an early hour,
Sulpicius and myself met him by chance:
But for the prisoner, he is at hand,
Ev'n at the palace gate; for as we enter'd
We saw him there, well circled round with guards,
Tho' in the martial throng we saw not Maro.

Nero. (*To the* Pontiff.) Said I not so?
(*To an* Officer.) Command them instantly
To bring this wordy Grecian to our presence.
[Exit Officer.

Sulpicius, thou hast known this Ethocles,
Is he a madman or ambitious knave,
Who sought on human folly to erect
A kind of fancied greatness for himself?

Sul. I know not which, great Nero.

Nero. And did'st thou not advise me earnestly
To rid the state of such a pestilence?

Sul. And still advise thee, Nero; for this Greek
Is dang'rous above all, who, with their lives,
Have yet paid forfeit for their strange belief.
They come: the prisoner in foreign garb
So closely wrapp'd, I scarcely see his face.

Enter Prisoner, attended.

Pon. If it in truth be he.

Nero. (*To the* Pontiff.) Dost thou still doubt?
(*To the* Prisoner). Stand forth, audacious rebel to my will!
Dost thou still brave it, false and subtile spirit?

Cor. (*throwing off his Grecian cloak, and advancing to* Nero.) I am not false, Augustus, but if subtle,

Add to my punishment what shall be deem'd
Meet retribution. I have truly sworn,
Or to produce thy thrall, or, therein failing,
To give my life for his; and here I stand.
Ethocles, by a higher power than thine,
Is yet reserved for great and blessed ends.
Take thou the forfeit; I have kept my oath
Nero. I am amazed beyond the power of utt'rance!
Grows it to such a pitch that Rome's brave captains
Are by this wizard sorcery so charm'd?
Then it is time, good sooth! that sweeping vengeance
Should rid the earth of every tainted thing
Which that curst sect hath touch'd. Cordenius Maro,
Thou who hast fought our battles, graced our state,
And borne a noble Roman's honour'd name,
What, O what power could tempt thee to this shame?
Cor. I have been tempted by that mighty Power,
Who gave to Rome her greatness, to the earth
Form and existence; yea, and to the soul
Of living, active man, sense and perception:
But not to shame, O Cæsar! not to shame!
Nero. What, hast thou not become a Nazarene,
As now I apprehended? Say, thou hast not;
And tho' thy present act is most audacious,
Yet will I spare thy life.
Cor. If thou would'st spare my life, and to that grace
Add all the wealth of Rome, and all the power
Of Rome's great Lord, I would not for the bribe
Be other than I am, or what I am
Basely deny.
Nero. Thou art a Christian, then? Thou art a maniac!
Cor. I am a man, who, seeing in the flames
Those dauntless Christians suffer, long'd to know
What power could make them brave the fear of death,
Disgrace, and infamy.—And I have learnt
That they adore a God,—one God, supreme,
Who, over all men, his created sons,
Rules as a father; and beholding sin,
Growth of corruption, mar this earthly race,
Sent down to earth his sinless heavenly Son,
Who left, with generous devoted love,
His state of exaltation and of glory,
To win them back to virtue, yea, to virtue
Which shall be crown'd with never-ending bliss.
I've learnt that they with deep adoring gratitude
Pay homage to that Son, the sent of God,
Who here became a willing sacrifice
To save mankind from sin and punishment,
And earn for them a better life hereafter,
When mortal life is closed. The heart's deep homage
Becoming well such creatures, so redeem'd.
Nero. Out on that dreaming madness?
Cor. Is it madness
To be the humble follower of Him,
Who left the bliss of heaven to be for us
A man on earth, in spotless virtue living
As man ne'er lived: such words of comfort speaking,
To rouse, and elevate, and cheer the heart,
As man ne'er spoke; and suff'ring poverty,
Contempt, and wrong, and pain, and death itself,
As man ne'er suffer'd?—O, if this be madness,
Which makes each generous impulse of my nature
Warm into ecstasy, each towering hope
Rise to the noblest height of bold conception;
That which is reason call'd, and yet has taught you
To worship different gods in every clime,
As dull and wicked as their worshippers,
Compared to it, is poor, confined, and mean,
As is the Scythian's curtain'd tent, compared
With the wide range of fair, expanded nature.
Nero. Away, away! with all those lofty words!
They but bewilder thee.
Cor. Yet hear them, Nero! O resist them not!
Perhaps they are appointed for thy good,
And for the good of thousands. When these hands
Which have so oft done Rome a soldier's service,
This tongue which speaks to thee, are turn'd to ashes,
What now appears so wild and fanciful,
May be remember'd with far other feelings.
It is not life that I request of Nero,
Altho' I said these hands have fought for Rome.
No; in the presence of these senators,
First bind thyself by every sacred oath
To give this body to the flames, then hear me;
O could I speak what might convince Rome's chief,
Her senators, her tribes, her meanest slaves,
Of Christ's most blessed truth, the fatal pile
Would be to me a car of joyful triumph,
Mounted more gladly than the laurell'd hero
Vaults to his envied seat, while Rome's throng'd streets
Resound his shouted name. Within me stirs
The spirit of truth and power which spoke to me,
And will upon thy mind.——
Nero. I charge thee cease!
Orc. Nay, Emperor! might I entreat for him?
Cor. (*catching hold of* Orceres *eagerly*.) Not for my life.
Orc. No; not for that, brave Maro!
(*To* Nero.) Let me entreat that he may freely speak.

Fear'st thou he should convince thee by his words?
That were a foul affront to thine own reason,
Or to the high divinities of Rome.

Nero. Cease, Prince of Parthia! nor too far presume
Upon a noble stranger's privilege.

Pon. Shall words so bold be to mine ear august
So freely utter'd with impunity?

Orc. Pontiff; I much revere thy sacred office,
But scorn thy paltry words. Not freely speak!
Not with impunity! Is this a threat?
Let Rome's great master, or his angry slaves,
Shed one drop of my blood, and on our plains
Where heretofore full many a Roman corse,
With Parthian arrows pierced, have vultures fed,
Twice thirty thousand archers in array,
Each with his bow strain'd for the distant mark,
Shall quickly stand, impatient for revenge.
Not with impunity!

Sul. Nay, nay, Orceres! with such haughty words
Thou'lt injure him thou plead'st for. Noble Cæsar!
Permit an aged man, a faithful servant,
To speak his thoughts. This brave deluded youth
Is now, as I sincerely do believe,
Beneath the power of strong and dire enchantment.
Hear not his raving words, but spare his life,
And when its power (for all delusion holds
Its power but for a season) shall be spent,
He will himself entreat your clemency,
And be again the soldier of the state,
Brave and obedient. Do not hear him now;
Command him to retire.

Cor. I thank thee, good Sulpicius, but my life,
For which thou plead'st, take no account of that:
I yield it freely up to any death,
Cruel or merciful, which the decree
Of Cæsar shall inflict, for leave to speak
Ev'n but a few short moments. Princely Nero!
The strong enchantment which deludes my soul
Is, that I do believe myself the creature,
Subject and Soldier, if I so may speak,
Of an Almighty Father, King, and Lord,
Before whose presence, when my soul shall be
Of flesh and blood disrobed, I shall appear,
There to remain with all the great and good
That e'er have lived on earth; yea, and with spirits,
Higher than earth e'er own'd, in such pure bliss
As human heart conceives not,—if my life,
With its imperfect virtue, find acceptance
From pard'ning love and mercy; but, if otherwise,
That I shall pass into a state of misery
With souls of wicked men and wrathful demons.
That I believe this earth on which we stand
Is but the vestibule to glorious mansions,
Thro' which a moving crowd forever press;
And do regard the greatest Prince, who now
Inflicts short torment on this flesh, as one
Who but in passing rudely rends my robe.
And thinkest thou that I, believing this,
Will shrink to do His will whom I adore?
Or thinkest thou this is a senseless charm,
Which soon will pass away?

Nero. High words, indeed, if resting on good proof!
A maniac's fancies may be grand and noble.

Cor. Ay, now thou list'nest, as a man should listen,
With an inquiring mind. Let me produce
The proofs which have constrain'd me to believe,
From written lore and well attested facts;—
Let me produce my proofs, and it may be,
The Spirit of Truth may touch thy yielding heart,
And save thee from destruction.

Nero. Ha! dost thou think to make of me a convert?
Away, weak fool! and most audacious rebel!
Give proofs of thy obedience, not thy faith,
If thou would'st earn thy pardon.

Cor. If thou condemn me in the flames to die,
I will and must obey thee; if to live,
Disgraced by pardon won thro' treachery
To God, my King supreme, and his bless'd Christ,
I am, indeed, thy disobedient rebel.

Nero. And shall as such, most dearly pay the forfeit.
Out!—take him from my presence till the time
Of public execution.
Cordenius Maro, thou shalt fall this day
By no ignoble foe;—a noble lion
Famish'd and fierce, shall be thy adversary.
And dost thou smile and raise thy head at this,
In stately confidence?

Cor. God will deliver me from every adversary.
And thou too smilest.—Yes; he will deliver
That which I call *myself*. For this poor form
Which vests me round, I give it to destruction
As gladly as the storm-beat traveller,
Who, having reached his destined place of shelter,
Drops at the door his mantle's cumbrous weight.

Nero. (*going.*) Then to thy visionary hopes I leave thee,
Incorrigible man! Here, in this chamber
Keep him secure till the appointed hour.
(*To the* Officers, &c.)
Off, good Sulpicius! hang not on me thus!

Sul. O, mighty Cæsar! countermand your orders:
Delay it but a month, a week, a day.
[EXEUNT Nero, Sulpicius, Senators, *&c.* Sulpicius *still keeping close to* Nero *in the act of supplication.*—Orceres, Cordenius, *and* Guards *remain, the* Guards *standing respectfully at a distance in the back-ground.*

Orc. Noble Cordenius! can thy martial spirit
Thus brook to be a public spectacle,
Fighting with savage beasts, the sport of fools,
Till thou shalt fall, deformed and horrible,
Mangled and piece-meal torn? It must not be.

Cor. Be not so moved, Orceres; I can bear it:
The God I worship, who hath made me humble,
Hath made me dauntless too. And for the shame
Which, as I guess, disturbs thee most, my Master,
The Lord and Leader I have sworn to follow,
Did as a malefactor end his days,
To save a lost, perverted race: shall I
Feel degradation, then, in following him?

Orc. In this, alas! thou'lt follow him too surely;
But whither, noble Maro?

Cor. Ev'n to my destined home, my Father's house.

Orc. And where is that? O, canst thou tell me where?
Beyond the ocean or beneath the earth?
Be there more worlds than this, beyond our ken
In regions vast, above the lofty stars?
Could we thro' the far stretch of space descry
Ev'n but the distant verge, tho' dimly mark'd,
Of any other world, I would believe
That virtuous men deceased have in good truth
A destined place of rest.

Cor. Believe it—O, believe it, brave Orceres!

Orc. I'll try to do it. I'll become a Christian,
Were it but only to defy this tyrant.

Cor. Thou must receive with a far different spirit
The faith of Jesus Christ. Perhaps thou wilt.
My heart leaps at the thought. When I am dead,
Remain in Rome no longer. In the East
Search thou for Ethocles, whom I have rescued;
And if he shall convert thee, O, how richly
He will repay all I have done for him!
—But, I would now withdraw a little space,
To pour my thoughts in prayer and thankfulness
To Him, the great, the good, the wise, the just,
Who holds man's spirit in his own high keeping,
And now supports my soul, and will support it,
Till my appointed task is done. In secret
The hearts by Jesus taught, were bid to pray,
And, if it be permitted, so will I.
(*To the* Guards, *who advance as he speaks to them.*)
My guards and, some time past, my fellow-soldiers,
Let me remain alone a little while,
And fear not my escape. If ye distrust me,
Watch well the door, and bind my hands with chains.

First Offi. Yes, brave Cordenius, to another chamber
Thou may'st retire, and we will watch without.
But be thy person free: we will not bind,
With felon cord or chain, those valiant hands
Which have so often for thy country fought,
Until we are commanded.

Cor. I thank ye all, my friends, and I believe
That I shall meet and thank ye too hereafter;
For there is something in you God must love,
And, loving, will not give to reprobation.
(*To* First Officer.)
Codrus, thou once didst put thy life in hazard,
And sufferedst much to save a helpless Greek
Who sought protection of thee.
(*Turning to the* Second Officer.)
Ay, and thou,
Young Lelius, once a rich and tempting ransom
Nobly remittedst to a wretched captive.
Ye are of those whom Jesus came to save:
Yes; we shall meet hereafter.
(*To* Third Officer.)
And thou, my former enemy, weepest thou?
We're enemies no more; thou art my brother.
I will retire; my little term of life
Runs fleetly on; I must not spend it thus.
[EXEUNT.

SCENE III.—A CROWDED AMPHITHEATRE: NERO AND THE SENATORS DISCOVERED IN THE BACK-GROUND SITTING IN STATE, PORTIA BY THE SIDE OF NERO, IN THE ACT OF SUPPLICATION.

Enter SULPICIUS on the front, meeting with another noble ROMAN.

Sul. (*eagerly.*) Is he advancing?

Noble Rom. Yes, and close at hand,
Surrounded by a group of martial friends.
Oft have I seen him on a day of battle
March to the charge with noble portly gait,
But now he treads the ground with buoyant steps
Which from its surface spring, as tho' he press'd
Substance of renovating power. His form

Seems stately and enlarged beyond its wont;
And in his countenance, oft turn'd to heaven,
There is a look as if some god dwelt in him.

Sul. How do the people greet him?

Noble Rom. Every face
Gazing upon him, turns, with transit quick,
Pity to admiration. Warlike veterans
Are shedding tears like infants. As he passed
The Legion he commanded in Armenia,
They raised a shout as if a victor came,
Saluting him with long and loud applause,
None daring to reprove them.

(*Noise without of shoutings.*)

Hark! he comes.

Enter CORDENIUS, followed by ORCERES and SYLVIUS, and attended by other friends, with GUARDS, &c.

Sul. (*advancing eagerly to meet him.*) Cordenius, O Cordenius! hear a friend,
A faithful ancient friend; thy Portia's father!
At Nero's footstool she is pleading for thee,
And will not plead in vain, if thou wilt testify
A yielding mind, a willingness to live.

Cor. I am so pleased to die, and am so honour'd
In dying for the pure and holy truth,
That nature's instinct seems in me extinguish'd.
But if the Emperor freely pardon me,
I shall believe it is the will of God
That I should yet on earth promote his service,
And, so believing, am content to live;
Living or dying, to his will resign'd.

Enter PORTIA on the front, and catching hold of CORDENIUS with eagerness and great agitation.

Por. Cordenius, thou art pardoned. Nero spares thee,
If thou wilt only say thou art a Roman,
In heart and faith as all thy fathers were,
Or but forbear to say thou art a Christian.

Cor. Thanks, gentle Portia! life preserved by thee,
Even to be spent in want and contumely,
Rather than grieve thy kind and tender heart,
My dearest, gentlest friend! I had accepted:
But to deny my God, and put dishonour
Upon the noblest, most exalted faith
That ever was to human thoughts reveal'd,
Is what I will not—yea, and tho' a Roman,
A noble Roman, and a soldier too,
I dare not do. Let Nero have this answer.

Por. No, not this answer, Maro; not this answer!
Cast not life from thee, dear, most dear Cordenius!
Life, too, which I should spend my life in cheering,
Cast it not from thee like a worthless thing.

Cor. Because it is not worthless but most precious,
And now, when dear to thee, more precious far
Than I have e'er esteem'd it, 'tis an offering
More meet for God's acceptance;
Withheld from Him, not even thyself, sweet maid,
Couldst cheer its course, nor yet couldst thou be happy.

Por. Nay, but I could!—to see thee still alive,
And by my side, mine own redeemed friend,
Should I not then be happy?

Cor. I should be by thy side, dear love! but thou,
With all thy excellence, couldst have no happiness,
Mated with one, whose living form alone
Could move upon the earth, whilst far adrift
His mind would dwell, by ceaseless meditation,
In other worlds of blessedness or woe;
Lost to the one, and to the other link'd
By horrid sympathy, till his wrench'd nature
Should to a demon's fell and restless spirit
At last be changed.

Por. Alas, alas! and dost thou then believe
That nought remains for thee but death or misery?

Cor. No, gentle Portia! firmly I believe
That I shall live in endless happiness,
And with the blest hereafter shall behold
Thy blessed self, with ecstasy of love,
Exceeding every thought of earth-born passion,
As the fair morning star in lovely brightness
Excels a night-fly, twinkling thro' the gloom.
Live in this hope, dear Portia! hold it fast;
And may His blessing rest upon thy head,
Who loves the loving and the innocent!
Farewell, in love and hope! farewell, in peace!
Farewell, in quick'ning faith,—in holy joy!

Por. (*clasping his knees.*) Nay, let me yet conjure thee!
Make me not wretched, me who once was happy,
Ay, happiest of all in loving thee.

Cor. This is mine anguish and my suffering!
O, good Sulpicius! bear her to her home.

Sul. (*leading her gently away, while she still clings to him.*) Forbear, my child, thy tears are all in vain.

Enter a LICTOR.

Lic. Cæsar forbids all further interruption
To his imperial sentence. Let Cordenius
Forthwith prepare him for the fatal fight.
This is mine office, and I must perform it.

(*Begins to disrobe* Cordenius, *while* Portia *shrieks aloud, and is carried off in the arms of her father.*)

Disrobe thee, Maro, of those martial weeds.

Cor. Gladly; for him I serve,—my glorious Master
Hath braced me with an armour that defies
All hostile things; in which I'll strive more proudly
Than I have ever fought in field or breach
With Rome's or Nero's foes.

Lic. Cæsar desires thee also to remember,

That no ignoble audience, e'en thy Emperor,
And all the stars of Rome, behold thy deeds.
Cor. Tell him my deeds shall witness'd be by those
Compared to whom the Emperor of Rome,
With all her high estates, are but as insects
Hov'ring at mid-day o'er some tainted marsh.
I know full well that no ignoble audience
Are present, tho' from mortal eyes conceal'd.
Farewell, my friends! kind, noble friends, farewell!
(*Apart to* Sylvius, *while* Orceres *goes off, re-appearing in another part of the theatre.*)
Sylvius, farewell! If thou should'st e'er be call'd
To die a holy Martyr for the truth,
God give thee then the joy which now I feel.
But keep thy faith conceal'd, till useful service
Shall call thee to maintain it. God be with thee! (*Looking round.*)
Where is Orceres gone? I thought him near me.
Syl. 'Tis but a moment since he left thy side
With eager haste.
Cor. He would not see my death. I'm glad he's gone.
Say I inquired for him, and say I bless'd him.
—Now I am ready. Earthly friends are gone.
Angels and blessed spirits, to your fellowship.
A few short pangs will bring me.
—O, Thou, who on the Cross for sinful men
A willing suff'rer hung'st! receive my soul!
Almighty God and Sire, supreme o'er all!
Pardon my sins and take me to thyself!
Accept the last words of my earthly lips:
High hallelujah to thy holy name!
(*A Lion now appears, issuing from a low door at the end of the Stage, and* Cordenius, *advancing to meet it, enters the Arena, when* Orceres *from a lofty stand amongst the spectators, sends an arrow from his bow, which pierces* Cordenius *through the heart. He then disappears, and re-entering below, catches hold of his hand as* Sylvius *supports him from falling to the ground.*)
Orc. (*to* Cordenius.) Have I done well, my friend?—this is a death
More worthy of a Roman.
I made a vow in secret to my heart,
That thou shouldst ne'er be made a mangled sight
For gazing crowds and Nero's ruthless eye.
Syl. That dying look, which almost smiles upon thee,
Says that thou hast done well; tho' words no more
May pass from these closed lips, whose last, bless'd utterance
Was the soul's purest and sublimest impulse.
(*The Curtain drops.*)

NOTE TO THE DRAMA.

For the better understanding of different allusions in the foregoing drama, I beg to transcribe a few passages from Fox's History of Martyrs, taken from Book 1., which contains an account of the ten persecutions of the primitive church.

He says, on the authority of Justin Martyr, —"And whether earthquake, pestilence, or whatever public calamity befell, it was attributed to the Christians;" (then is added) "over and besides all these, a great occasion that stirred up the emperors against the Christians came by one Publius Tarquinius, the chief prelate of the idolatrous sacrifices, and Mamertinus, the chief governor of the city, in the time of Trajanus, who, partly with money, partly with sinister, pestilent counsaile, partly with infamous accusations, (as witnesseth Nauclerus,) incensed the mind of the emperor so much against God's people."

In the account of the third persecution (An. 100), Eustasius, a great and victorious captain, is mentioned as suffering martyrdom by order of the Emperor Adrian, who went to meet him on his return from conquest over the barbarians, but upon Eustasius's refusing on the way to do sacrifice to Apollo for his victory, brought him to Rome, and had him put to death.

In the fourth persecution, (An. 162), it is mentioned that many Christian soldiers were found in the army of Marcus Aurelius.

"As these aforesaid were going to their execution, there was a certain souldiour who in their defence took part against those who rayled upon them, for the which cause the people crying out against him, he was apprehended, and being constant in his profession, was forthwith beheaded."

In the persecutions of Decius, several soldiers are mentioned as martyrs, some of whom had before concealed their faith; and in the tenth persecution, Mauritius, the captain of the Theban band, with his soldiers, to the number of 6666 (a number probably greatly exaggerated), are recorded as having been slain as martyrs by the order of Maximinian.

Tertullian, in his Apology for the Christians, mentions the slanderous accusations against them, of putting to death children and worshipping an ass's head. And when we consider how fond the ignorant are of excitement arising from cruel, absurd, and wonderful stories, and how easily a misapprehended and detached expression may be shaped by conjecture into a detailed transaction, such accusations were very probable and might be naturally expected; particularly when the unoffending meekness of their behaviour made supposed hidden atrocities more necessary for the justification of their persecutors.

TO THE READER.

The following play is not offered to the public as it is acted in the Edinburgh theatre, but is printed from the original copy which I gave to that theatre. The story, from which I have taken the plot is this.

In the 15th century, a feud had long subsisted between the lord of Argyll and the chieftain of Maclean; the latter was totally subdued by the Campbells, and Maclean* sued for peace, demanding at the same time, in marriage, the young and beautiful daughter of Argyll. His request was granted, and the lady carried home to the island of Mull. There she had a son, but the Macleans were hostile to this alliance with the Campbells.—They swore to desert their chief if they were not suffered to put his wife to death, with her infant son, who was then at nurse, that the blood of the Campbells might not succeed to the inheritance of Maclean. Maclean resisted these threats; fearing the power and vengeance of Argyll: but at length fear for his own life, should he refuse the demands of his clan, made him yield to their fury, and he only drew from them a promise that they would not shed her blood. One dark winter night she was forced into a boat, and, regardless of her cries and lamentations, left upon a barren rock, mid-way between the coasts of Mull and Argyll, which, at high-water, is covered with the sea. As she was about to perish, she saw a boat steering its course at some distance; she waved her hand, and uttered a feeble cry. She was now upon the top of the rock, and the water as high as her breast, so that the boatmen mistook her for a large bird. They took her, however, from the rock, and, knowing her to be the daughter of Argyll, carried her to the castle of her father.†

The earl rewarded her deliverers, and desired them to keep the circumstance secret for a time, during which he concealed her till he should hear from Mull. Maclean solemnly announced her death to Argyll, and soon came himself with his friends, all in mourning, to condole with the Earl at his castle. Argyll received him clad also in black. Maclean was full of lamentations; the earl appeared very sorrowful; a feast was served with great pomp in the hall; every one took his place, while a seat was left empty on the right hand of Argyll; the door opened, and they beheld the lady of Maclean enter, superbly dressed, to take her place at the table. Maclean stood for a moment aghast, when, the servants and retainers making a lane for him to pass through the hall to the gate of the castle, the earl's son, the lord of Lorne, followed him, and slew him as he fled. His friends were detained as hostages fo the child, who had been preserved by the affections of his nurse.—"So far," says my copy of the legend, "the story is authentic, and delivered from age to age in ancient gaelic songs; and it is likewise a tradition from generation to generation in the family of Argyll. The same authorities also add, that this deserving daughter of Argyll, was rewarded for her sufferings by wedding, with her father's consent, an amiable young nobleman who adored her, and was mutually beloved. To this man her father had formerly refused her hand, disposing of her as a bond of union, to unite the warring clans of Argyll and Maclean."

Such is the substance of my story, with no circumstance of the smallest consequence omitted; and my reader will perceive I have deviated from it very slightly. In regard to the characters that people it, I was left, except in two instances, entirely to invention; viz. that of Argyll, who in keeping secret the return of his daughter, &c. gives one the idea of a cautious and crafty man; and that of Maclean, who being said not to have consented at first to give up his wife for fear of the vengeance of his father-in-law, and afterwards to have done so for fear of losing his life, though with a promise drawn from the clan that they should not shed her blood, gives one the idea of a man cowardly and mean, but not savage; a personage as little fitted for the drama as one could well imagine. To make the chief of Mull, therefore, somewhat interesting and presentable and yet fit for the purposes of the story, has been the greatest difficulty I have had to contend with: a difficulty, I readily admit, which it required a more skilful hand to overcome. To have made him sacrifice his wife from jealousy, was a common beaten path, which I felt no inclination to enter; and, though it might have been consistent with his conduct in the first part of the story, would not, as I conceive, have been at all so with his conduct in the conclusion of it, when he comes to the castle of Argyll. To have made him rude, unfeeling, and cruel, and excited against her by supposing she was actually plotting his ruin at the instigation of her father, would only have presented us with a hard, bare, unshaded character, which takes no hold of our interest or attention. I have, therefore, imagined him a man of personal courage, brave

* Called in the representation Duart.

† The boat was commanded by her foster-father, who knew the cry of his Dalt, i. e. foster-daughter, and insisted they should pull into the rock.

in the field, but weak and timid in counsel, irresolute and unsteady in action; superstitious, and easily swayed by others, yet anxious to preserve his power as chieftain; attached to his clan, attached to his lady, and of an affectionate and gentle disposition. I have never put him in the course of the play at all in fear of his life. The fear of being deserted by his clan, and losing his dignity as their chief, with the superstitious dread of bringing some terrible calamity upon the Macleans, are represented as the motives for his crime. These qualities, I supposed, might have formed a character, imperfect and reprehensible indeed to a deplorable degree, but neither uninteresting nor detestable. As to his telling a direct lie when the earl questions him so closely about his wife's death, his whole conduct at the castle of Argyll, coming there in mourning as from a funeral, is an enacted lie; and it would have been very inconsistent with such conduct to have made him, when so hardly beset, hold out against this last act of degradation and unworthiness, which exhibits a lesson to every ingenuous mind more powerful than his death.

This character, however, the design of which I am doing what I can to defend, has not, I fear, been very skilfully executed; for, I understand, it has been pretty generally condemned; and when this is the case, particularly by an audience eminently disposed to be favourable, there must be a fault somewhere, either in design or execution. I must confess, I should wish this fault to be found in the last particular rather than the first: not for the sake of the play itself, which suffers equally in either case, but because there is a taste, that too generally prevails, for having all tragic characters drawn very good or very bad, and having the qualities of the superior personages allotted to them according to established heroic rules, by which all manner of cruelty, arrogance, and tyranny are freely allowed, while the slightest mixture of timidity, or any other of the tamer vices, are by no means to be tolerated. It is a taste, indeed, that arises from a nobleness in our nature; but the general prevalence of which would be the bane of all useful and natural delineation of character. For this reason, then, I would fain justify, if I could, the general design of Maclean's character, leaving the execution of it to the mercy of all who may do me the honour to bestow upon it any attention.

Had I not trusted to what Maclean and others, in the course of the play, assert of his personal courage, but brought out some circumstance in the cavern scene, before his spirits were cowed with superstitious dread, that would really have shown it; his character, perhaps, would have appeared less liable to objection. It was my intention in that scene that he should have been supposed to leave the stage with his mind greatly subdued and bewildered, but not yet prevailed upon to give up his wife; leaving the further effects produced upon him by the seer of the isle, which did prevail on him to take the oath demanded by his vassals to be imagined by the audience; thinking it unsafe to venture such an exhibition upon the stage, lest it should have a ludicrous effect. But this my intention I must have badly fulfilled, since it has been, I believe, almost entirely overlooked. In the cavern scene, I doubt, I have foolishly bestowed more pains on the vassals than the laird.

THE FAMILY LEGEND.

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

MEN.

MACLEAN, *Chief of the clan of that name.*
THE EARL OF ARGYLL,
JOHN OF LORNE, *son to* Argyll,
SIR HUBERT DE GREY, *friend to* Lorne,
BENLORA, LOCHTARISH, GLENFADDEN, } *the kinsmen and chief vassals of* Maclean.
MORTON,
DUGALD,
Piper, Fishermen, Vassals, &c.

WOMEN.

HELEN, *daughter of* Argyll, *and wife of* Maclean.
ROSA.
Fisherman's wife.

SCENE *in the island of Mull, and the opposite coast, &c. and afterwards in* Argyll's *Castle.*

PROLOGUE.

WRITTEN BY WALTER SCOTT, ESQ.

Tis sweet to hear expiring summer's sigh,
Through forests tinged with russet, wail and die;
Tis sweet and sad the latest notes to hear
Of distant music, dying on the ear;
But far more sadly sweet, on foreign strand,
We list the legends of our native land,
Linked as they come with every tender tie,
Memorials dear of youth and infancy.
Chief thy wild tales, romantic Caledon,
Wake keen remembrance in each hardy son;
Whether on India's burning coasts he toil,
Or till Acadia's* winter-fettered soil,
He hears with throbbing heart and moisten'd eyes,
And as he hears, what dear illusions rise!
It opens on his soul his native dell,
The woods wild waving, and the water's swell,
Tradition's theme, the tower that threats the plain,
The mossy cairn that hides the hero slain;
The cot, beneath whose simple porch was told
By grey hair'd patriarch, the tales of old,
The infant group that hush'd their sports the while,
And the dear maid who listen'd with a smile.
The wanderer, while the vision warms his brain,
Is denizen of Scotland once again.
Are such keen feelings to the crowd confined,
And sleep they in the poet's gifted mind?
Oh no! for she, within whose mighty page
Each tyrant passion shows his woe and rage,
Has felt the wizard influence they inspire,
And to our own traditions tuned her lyre.
Yourselves shall judge—whoe'er has raised the sail
By Mull's dark coast, has heard this evening's tale.
The plaided boatmen, resting on his oar,
Points to the fatal rock amid the roar
Of whitening waves, and tells whate'er to-night
Our humble stage shall offer to your sight;
Proudly preferr'd, that first our efforts give
Scenes glowing from her pen to breathe and live;
More proudly yet, should Caledon approve
The filial token of a daughter's love.

* Acadia, or Nova Scotia.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—BEFORE THE GATE OF MACLEAN'S CASTLE, IN THE ISLE OF MULL.

Several highlanders discovered crossing, carrying loads of fuel; whilst BENLORA is seen on one side, in the back ground, pacing to and fro, and frequently stopping and muttering to himself.

1st High. This heavy load, I hope, will be the last:
My back is almost broken.
2d High. Sure am I,
Were every beeve in Mull slain for the feast,
Fuel enough already has been stow'd
To roast them all: and must we still with burdens
Our weary shoulders gall?

Enter MORTON.

Mor. Ye lazy lubbards!
Grumble ye thus?—ye would prefer, I trow,
To sun your easy sides, like household curs,
Each on his dung-hill stretch'd, in drowsy sloth.
Fie on't, to grumble on a day like this,
When to the clan a rousing feast is given,
In honour of an heir born to the chief—
A brave Maclean, still to maintain the honours
Of this your ancient race!
1st High. A brave Maclean indeed!—vile mongrel hound!
Come from the south, where all strange mixtures be
Of base and feeble! sprung of varlet's blood!

What is our race to thee?

2d High. (*to* Morton.) Thou'lt chew, I doubt not,
Thy morsel in the hall with right good relish,
Whether Maclean or Campbell be our lord.

Mor. Ungracious surly lubbards! in, I say,
And bring your burdens quicker. And, besides,
Where is the heath and hare-bells, from the glen,
To deck my lady's chamber?

2d High. To deck my lady's chamber!

Mor. Heartless hounds!
Is she not kind and gentle? spares she aught
Her generous stores afford, when you or yours
Are sick, or lack relief? hoards she in chests,
When shipwreck'd strangers shiver on our coast,
Or robe or costly mantle?—all comes forth!
And when the piercing shriek of drowning mariners
Breaks through the night, up starting from her couch,
To snatch, with eager haste, the flaming torch,
And from the tower give notice of relief,
Who comes so swiftly as her noble self?
And yet ye grumble.

1st High. Ay, we needs must own,
That, were she not a Campbell, fit she were
To be a queen, or even the thing she is—
Our very chieftain's dame. But, in these towers,
The daughter of Argyll to be our lady!

Mor. Out! mountain savages! is this your spite?
Go to!

2d High. Speak'st thou to us? thou lowland loun!
Thou wandering pedlar's son, or base mechanic!
Comest thou to lord it here o'er brave Macleans?
We'll carry loads at leisure, or forbear,
As suits our fancy best, nor wait thy bidding.

[EXEUNT Highlanders *and* Morton.

Ben. (*after a pause, not observing* Lochtarish, *who enters behind him.*) Heigh ho, heigh ho, the day!

Loch. How so? what makes Benlora sigh so deeply?

Ben. (*turning.*) And does Lochtarish ask? full well thou know'st,
The battles of our clan I've boldly fought,
And will maintain'd its honour.

Loch. Yes, we know it.

Ben. Who dared, unpunished, a Maclean to injure?
Yea; he who dared but with a scornful lip
Our name insult, I thought it feeble vengeance
If steed or beeve within his walls were left,
Or of his holds one tower unruined stood.

Loch. Ay; who dared then to brave us?

Ben. Thus dealt Benlora even with common foes;
But in the warfare of our deadly feud,
When rung the earth beneath our bloody strife,
And brave Macleans brave Campbells boldly fronted,
Fiends as they are, I still must call them brave,
What sword more deeply drank the hated blood
Than this which now I grasp—but idly grasp.

Loch. There's ne'er a man of us that knows it not,
That swears not by thy valor.

Ben. Until that fatal day, by ambush ta'en,
And in a dungeon kept, where, two long years,
Nor light of day, nor human voice e'er cheer'd
My loneliness, when did I ever yield,
To even the bravest of that hateful name,
One step of ground upon the embattled field—
One step of honour in the banner'd hall?

Loch. Indeed thou hast our noble champion been;
Deserving well the trust our chief deceased,
This chieftain's father, did to thee consign.
But when thou wert a captive, none to head us,
But he, our youthful lord, yet green in arms,
We fought like Macleans; or else our foe,
By fiends assisted, fought with fiend like power;
Far—far beyond the Campbell's wonted pitch.
Even so it did befal:—we lost the day—:
That fatal day!——then came this shameful peace.

Ben. Ay, and this wedding; when, in form of honour
Conferr'd upon us, Helen of Argyll
Our sovereign dame was made,—a bosom worm,
Nursed in that viper's nest, to infuse its venom
Through all our after race. This is my welcome!
From dungeons freed, to find my once-loved home
With such vile change disgraced; to me more hateful
Than thraldom's murkiest den. But to be loosen'd
From captive's chains, to find my hands thus bound!

Loch. It is, indeed, a vile and irksome peace.

Ben. Peace, say they! who will bonds of friendship sign
Between the teeming ocean's finny broods,
And say, 'sport these upon the hither waves,
And leave to those that farther billowy reach?'
A Campbell here to queen it o'er our heads,
The potent dame o'er quell'd and beaten men,
Rousing or soothing us, as proud Argyll
Shall send her secret counsel!—hold, my heart!
This, base degenerate men!—this, call ye peace!
Forgive my weakness: with dry eyes I laid
My mother in her grave, but now my cheeks
Are, like a child's, with scalding drops disgraced.

Loch. What I shall look upon, ere in the dust
My weary head is laid to rest, Heaven knows,
Since I have lived to see Benlora weep.

Ben. One thing, at least, thou ne'er shalt live to see—
Benlora crouching, where he has commanded.
Go, ye who will, and crowd the chieftain's hall,
And deal the feast, and nod your grizzled heads
To martial pibrochs, play'd, in better days,
To those who conquer'd, not who wooed their foes;
My soul abhors it. On the sea beat rock,
Removed from every form and sound of man;
In proud communion with the fitful winds
Which speak, with many tongues, the fancied words
Of those who long in silent dust have slept;
While eagles scream, and sullen surges roar—
The boding sounds of ill;—I'll hold my feast,—
My moody revelry.

Loch. Nay, why so fierce?
Think'st thou we are a tame and mongrel pack?
Dogs of true breed we are, though for a time
Our master-hound forsakes us. Rouse him forth
The noble chase to lead: his deep-toned yell
Full well we know; and for the opening sport
Pant keenly.

Ben. Ha! is there amongst ye still
Spirit enough for this?

Loch. Yes, when good opportunity shall favour.
Of this, my friend, I'll speak to thee more fully
When time shall better serve. Maclean, thou know'st,
Is of a soft, unsteady, yielding nature;
And this, too well, the crafty Campbell knew,
When to our isle he sent this wily witch
To mould, and govern, and besot his wits,
As suits his crafty ends. I know the youth:
This dame or we must hold his will in thraldom:
Which of the two,—but softly: steps approach.
Of this again.

Ben. As early as thou wilt.

Loch. Then be it so: some staunch determined spirits
This night in Irka's rocky cavern meet.
There must thou join us. Wear thou here the while
A brow less cloudy, suited to the times.

Enter GLENFADDEN.

See, here comes one who wears a merry face;
Yet, ne'ertheless, a clan's-man staunch he is,
Who hates a Campbell, worse than Icom's monks
The horned fiend.

Ben. Ha! does he so? (*to* Glenfadden,) Glenfadden!
How goes it with thee?—joyous days' are these—
These days of peace.

Glen. These days of foul disgrace!
Comest thou to cheer the piper in our hall,
And goblets quaff to the young chieftain's health,
From proud Argyll descended?

Ben. (*smiling grimly.*) Yes, Glenfadden,
If ye will have it so; not else.

Glen. Thy hand—
Thy noble hand!—thou art Benlora still.
(*Shaking* Benlora *warmly by the hand, and then turning to* Lochtarish.)
Know ye that banish'd Allen is return'd—
Allen of Dura?

Loch. No; I knew it not.
But in good time he comes. A daring knave:
He will be useful. (*after considering.*) Of Maclean we'll crave
His banishment to cancel; marking well
How he receives it. This will serve to show
The present bent and bearing of his mind.
(*pausing.*)
Were it not also well, that to our council
He were invited, at a later hour,
When of our purpose we shall be assured?

Glen. Methinks it were.

Loch. In, then; now is our time.

Ben. I'll follow thee, when I awhile have paced
Yon lonely path, and thought upon thy counsel.

[EXEUNT Lochtarish *and* Glenfadden *into the castle and* Benlora *opposite.*

SCENE II.—AN APARTMENT IN THE CASTLE.

Enter MORTON and ROSA, speaking as they enter.

Rosa. Speak with my Lady privately?

Mor. Ay, please ye:
Something I have to say, regards her nearly,
And though I doubt not, madam, your attachment—

Rosa. Good Morton, no apology: thy caution
Is prudent; trust me not till thou hast proved me.
But oh! watch o'er thy Lady with an eye
Of keen and guarded zeal! she is surrounded— (*looks cautiously.*)
Does no one hear us?—O those baleful looks
That, from beneath dark surly brows, by stealth,
Are darted on her by those stern Macleans!
Ay; and the gestures of those fearful men,
As on the shore in savage groups they meet,
Sending their loosen'd tartans to the wind,
And tossing high their brawny arms, where oft,
In vehement discourse, I have, of late,
At distance mark'd them. Yes; thou shakest thy head:
Thou hast observed them too.

Mor. I have observed them oft. That calm Lochtarish,
Calm as he is, the growing rancour fosters:
For, fail the offspring of their chief, his sons
Next in succession are. He hath his ends,
For which he stirs their ancient hatred up;
And all too well his devilish pains succeed.

Rosa. Too well indeed! the very bed-rid crones
To whom my Lady sends, with kindly care
Her cheering cordials,—could'st thou have believ'd it?
Do mutter spells to fence from things unholy,
And grumble, in a hollow smother'd voice,
The name of Campbell, as unwillingly
They stretch their wither'd hands to take her bounty.
The wizards are in pay to rouse their fears
With dismal tales of future ills foreseen,
From Campbell and Maclean together join'd
In hateful union.—Even the very children,
Sporting the heath among, when they discover
A loathsome toad or adder on their path,
Crush it with stones, and, grinding wickedly
Their teeth, in puny spite, call it a Campbell.
Benlora too, that savage gloomy man—

Mor. Ay, evil is the day that brings him back:
Unjustly by a Campbell hath he been,
The peaceful treaty of the clans unheeded,
In thraldom kept; from which, but now escap'd,
He like a furious tyger is enchafed,
And thinks Argyll was privy to the wrong
His vassal put upon him. Well I know
His bloody vengeful nature: and Maclean,
Weak and unsteady, mov'd by ev'ry counsel,
Brave in the field, but still in purpose timid,
Oft times the instrument in wicked hands
Of wrongs he would abhor, alas, I fear,
Will ill defend the lovely spouse he swore
To love and cherish.

Rosa. Heavy steps approach:
Hush! see who comes upon us!—sly Lochtarish,
And his dark colleagues.—Wherefore come they hither? (Morton *retires.*)

Enter Lochtarish, Benlora, and Glenfadden.

Loch. We thought, fair maid, to find the chieftain here.

Rosa. He is in these apartments.

Loch. Would it greatly
Annoy your gentleness to tell his honour,
We wait to speak with him upon affairs
Of much concernment?

Rosa. My service is not wanted; to your wish,
See, there he comes unwarn'd, and with him too
His noble Lady. (*retiring.*)

Loch. Ha! there they come! see how he hangs upon her,
With boyish fondness!

Glen. Ah, the goodly creature!
How fair she is! how winning!—see that form;
Those limbs beneath their foldy vestments moving,
As though in mountain clouds they robed were,
And music of the air their motion measur'd.

Loch. Ay, shrewd and crafty earl! 'tis not for nought
Thou hither sent'st this jewel of thy race.
A host of Campbells, each a chosen man,
Could not enthral us, as, too soon I fear,
This single Campbell will. Shrewd crafty foe!

Ben. Hell lend me aid, if Heaven deny its grace,
But I will thwart him, crafty though he be!

Loch. But now for your petition: see we now
How he receives your suit.

Enter Maclean and Helen.

Ben. (*eyeing her attentively as she enters.*) A potent foe it is:
Ay, by my faith, a fair and goodly creature!

Mac. Again good morrow to ye, gallant kinsmen:
Come ye to say, I can with any favour
The right good liking prove, and high regard
I bear to you, who are my chiefest strength,—
The pillars of my clan?

Ben. Yes, we are come, Maclean, a boon to beg.

Loch. A boon that, granted, will yourself enrich.

Mac. Myself enrich?

Loch. Yes; thereby wilt thou be
One gallant man the richer. Hear us out.
Allen of Dura, from his banishment———

Mac. False reaver! name him not.—Is he return'd?
Dares he again set foot upon this isle?

Ben. Yes, chief; upon this isle set foot he hath:
And on nor isle nor main land doth there step
A braver man than he.———Lady, forgive me:
The boldest Campbell never saw his back.

Hel. Nay, good Benlora, ask not my forgiveness;
I love to hear thee praise, with honest warmth,
The valiant of thy name, which now is mine.

Glen. Ha! good Benlora!—this is queenly pride. (*aside.*)
Madam, you honour us.

Hel. If so, small thanks be to my courtesy.
Sharing myself with pride the honest fame
Of every brave Maclean.———I'll henceforth keep
A proud account of all my gallant friends:
And every valiant Campbell therein noted,
On the opposing leaf, in letters fair,
Shall with a brave Maclean be proudly match'd.

(Benlora *and* Glenfadden *bow in silence.*)

Loch. Madam, our grateful duty waits upon you. (*to* Benlora.)
Ben. (*aside.*) What think I of her?
Incomparable hypocrite!
Loch. But to our suit: for words of courtesy
It must not be forgotten.——Chief, vouchsafe:
Benlora here, who from his loathey prison,
Which for your sake two years he hath endured,
Begs earnestly this grace for him we mention'd,
Allen of Dura.
Kneel, man; be more pressing. (*to* Benlora.)
Ben. (*to* Lochtarish.) Nay, by my fay! if crouching pleases thee,
Do it thyself.
(*Going up proudly to* Maclean.)
Maclean; thy father put into these hands
The government and guidance of thy nonage.
How I the trust fulfill'd, this castle, strength-en'd
With walls and added towers, and stor'd, besides,
With arms and trophies, in rough warfare won
From even the bravest of our western clans,
Will testify. What I in recompense
Have for my service earn'd, these galled wrists (*baring his arm.*)
Do also testify.——Such as I am,
For an old friend I plainly beg this grace:
Say if my boon be granted or denied.
Mac. The man for whom thou plead'st is most unworthy;
Yet let him safely from my shores depart;
I harm him not.
Ben. (*indignantly.*) My suit is then denied.
(*to* Lochtarish *and* Glenfadden.)
Go ye to Dura's Allen; near the shore
He harbours in his aged mother's cot;
Bid him upon the ocean drift again
His shatter'd boat, and be a wanderer still.
Hel. (*eagerly.*) His aged mother!
(*to* Maclean.)
Oh! and shall he go?
No, no, he shall not! on this day of joy,
Wilt thou to me refuse it?
(*Hanging upon him with looks of entreaty, till seeing him relent, she then turns joyfully to* Benlora.)
Bid your wanderer
Safe with his aged mother still remain,—
A banish'd man no more.
Mac. This is not well; but be it as thou wilt;
Thou hast prevail'd, my Helen.
(Lochtarish *and* Glenfadden *bowing low.*)
We thank thee, Lady.
(Benlora *bows slightly.*)
Mac. (*to* Benlora.) Then let thy friend remain: he has my pardon.
(Benlora *bows again in silence.*)
Clear up thy brow, Benlora; he is pardon'd.
(*pauses.*)
We trust to meet you shortly in the hall;
And there, my friends, shall think our happy feast
More happy for your presence—
(*with anxious courtesy, to* Benlora.)
Thy past services,
Which great and many are, my brave Benlora,
Shall be remember'd well. Thou hast my honour,
And high regard.
Hel. And mine to boot, good kinsman, if the value
You put upon them makes them worth the having.
Ben. (*bows sullenly retiring and aside.*)
Good kinsman! good Benlora! gracious words
From this most high and potent dame, vouchsafed
To one so poor and humble as myself
[Exit.
Loch. (*to* Glenfadden.) But thou forgettest——
Glen. (*to* Lochtarish.) No; I'll stay behind,
And move Maclean to join our nightly meeting.
Midnight the hour when you desire his presence?
Loch. Yes, even so: then will we be prepared. [Exit.
Glen. (*to* Maclean.) Chieftain, I would some words of privacy
Speak with you, should your leisure now permit.
Mac. Come to my closet then, I'll hear thee gladly.
[Exeunt Maclean *and* Glenfadden.
Hel. (*to* Rosa, *who now comes forward.*)
Where hast thou been, my Rosa? with my boy?
Have they with wild flowers deck'd his cradle round?
And peeps he through them like a little nestling—
A little heath-cock broken from its shell,
That through the bloom puts forth its tender beak,
As steals some rustling footstep on his nest?
Come, let me go, and look upon him. Soon,
Ere two months more go by, he'll look again
In answer to my looks, as though he knew
The wistful face that looks so soft upon him,
And smiles so dearly, is his mother's. Think'st thou
He'll soon give heed and notice to my love?
Rosa. I doubt it not: he is a lively infant,
And moves his little limbs with vigour, spreading
His fingers forth, as if in time they would
A good claymore clench bravely.
Hel. A good claymore clench bravely!—O, to see him
A man!—a valiant youth!—a noble chieftain!
And laying on his plaided shoulder, thus,

A mother's hand, say proudly, "this is mine!"
I shall not then a lonely stranger be.
Midst those who bless me not. I shall not then—
But silent be my tongue. (*weeps.*)

Rosa. Dear madam, still in hope look forward cheerly.
(Morton *comes forward.*)
And here is Morton, with some tidings for you:
God grant they comfort you!—I must withdraw:
His wary faithfulness mistrusts my love,
But I am not offended. (*offering to retire.*)

Hel. Nay, remain.
Say what thou hast to say, my worthy Morton,
For Rosa is as faithful as thyself.

Mor. This morning, Lady, 'mongst the farther cliffs,
Drest like a fisher peasant, did I see
The Lord of Lorne, your brother.

Hel. Ha! say'st thou,
The Lord of Lorne, my brother?—thou'rt deceived.

Mor. No, no; in vain his sordid garb conceal'd him:
His noble form and stately step I k[illegible]
Before he spoke.

Hel. He spoke to thee?

Mor. He did.

Hel. Was he alone?

Mor. He was; but, near at hand,
Another stranger, noble as himself,
And in like garb disguised, amongst the rocks
I mark'd, though he advanced not.

Hel. Alas, alas, my brother! why is this?
He spoke to thee, thou say'st—I mean my brother:
What did he say?
He earnestly entreats
To see you privately; and bids you say
When this may be. Meantime, he lies conceal'd
Where I may call him forth at your command.

Hel. O, why disguised?—think'st thou he is not safe?

Mor. Safe in his hiding-place he is: but yet
The sooner he shall leave this coast, the better.

Hel. To see him thus!—O, how I am beset;
Tell him at twilight, in my nurse's chamber,
I will receive him. But be sure thou add,
Himself alone will I receive—alone—
With no companion must he come. Forget not
To say, that I entreat it earnestly.

Mor. I will remember this.

Hel. Go to him quickly, then; and, till the hour,
Still do thou hover near them. Watch his haunt,
Lest some rude fishermen or surly hind
Surprise him. Go thou quickly. O, be prudent!
And be not for a moment off the watch.

Mor. Madam, I will obey you: trust me well. [Exit.

Hel. (*much disturbed.*) My brother on the coast; and with him too,
As well I guess, the man I must not see!

Rosa. Mean you the brave sir Hubert?

Hel. Yes, my Rosa.
My noble brother in his powerful self
So strong in virtue stands, he thinks full surely
The daughter of his sire no weakness hath,
And wists not how a simple heart must struggle
To be what it would be—what it [illegible]t be—
Ay, and, so aid me, Heaven! what it shall be.

Rosa. And Heaven will aid you, madam, doubt it not.
Though on this subject still you have represt
All communing, yet, ne'ertheless, I well
Have mark'd your noble striving, and revered
Your silent inward warfare, bravely held;
In this more pressing combat firm and valiant,
As is your noble brother in the field.

Hel. I thank thee, gentle Rosa; thou art kind—
I should be franker with thee; but I know not—
Something restrains me here.
(*laying her hand on her heart.*)
I love and trust thee;
And on thy breast I'll weep when I am sad;
But ask not why I weep. [Exeunt.

ACT II.

Scene I.—An apartment almost dark; the door of an inner chamber, standing a little ajar.

Enter John of Lorne, and Sir Hubert de Grey, disguised as peasants.

De Grey. Nay, stop, I pray; advance we not too far?

Lorne. Morton hath bid us in this place to wait.
The nurse's chamber is adjoining to it;
And, till her light within give notice, here
Thou may'st remain: when I am call'd, thou'lt leave me.

De Grey. Till thou art call'd! and may I stay to hear
The sweetness of her voice—her footsteps sound:—
Perhaps snatch in the torch's hasty light
One momentary vision of that form—
The form that hath to me of earthly make
No fellow? may it be without transgression?

Lorne. Why should'st thou not? De Grey, thou art too fearful;

Here art thou come with no dishonest will;
And well she knows thine honour. Her commands,
Though we must yield to them, capricious seem;
Seeing thou art with me, too nicely scrupulous;
And therefore need no farther be obey'd
Than needs must be. She puts thee not on honour.
Were I so used—

De Grey. Spite of thy pride, would'st thou
Revere her still the more.—O, no, brave Lorne!
I blame her not. When she, a willing victim,
To spare the blood of two contending clans,
Against my faithful love her suffrage gave,
I blest her: and the deep but chasten'd sorrow
With which she bade me—Oh! that word! farewell,
Is treasured in my bosom as its share
Of all that earthly love hath power to give.
It came from Helen, and, from her received,
Shall not be worn with thankless dull repining.

Lorne. A noble heart thou hast: such manly meekness
Becomes thy generous nature. But for me,
More fierce and wilful, sorely was I chafed
To see thy faithful heart robb'd of its hope,
All for the propping up a hollow peace
Between two warlike clans, who will, as long
As bagpipes sound, and blades flash to the sun,
Delighting in the noble sport of war,
Some fierce opponents find. What doth it boot.
If men in fields must fight, and blood be shed,
What clans are in the ceaseless strife opposed?

De Grey. Ah, John of Lorne! too keenly is thy soul
To war inclin'd—to wasteful, ruthless war.

Lorne. The warlike minstrel's rousing lay thou lov'st:
Shall bards i' the hall sing of our fathers' deeds
To lull their sons to sleep? vain simple wish!
I love to hear the sound of holy bell,
And peaceful men their praises lift to heaven:
I love to see around their blazing fire
The peasant and his cheerful family sit,
Eating their fearless meal. But when the roar
Of battle rises, and the closing clans,
Darkening the sun gleam'd heath, in dread affray
Are mingled; blade with blade, and limb with limb,
Nerve-strain'd, in terrible strength; yea, soul with soul
Nobly contending; who would raise aloft
The interdicting hand? and say, "Be still'd."
If this in me be sin, may Heaven forgive me!
That being am not I.

De Grey. In very deed
This is thy sin; and of thy manly nature
The only blemish worthy of that name.
More peaceful be, and thou wilt be more noble.

Lorne. Well, here we will not wrangle for the point.
None in the embattled field who have beheld
Hubert de Grey in mailed hauberk fight,
Will guess how much that knight in peace delights.
Still burns my heart that such a man as thou
Wast for this weak, unsteady, poor Maclean——

De Grey. Nay, with contempt, I pray thee, name him not.
Her husband, and despised! O, no, no, no!
All that pertains to her, even from that hour,
Honored and sacred is.

Lorne. Thou generous heart! more noble than myself!
I will not grieve thee.—I'll to Helen go,
With every look and word that might betray
Indignant thoughts, or wound her gentle spirit,
Strictly suppress'd: and to her ear will give
Thy generous greetings, and thy manly words
Of cheering comfort;—all most faithfully
Shall be remembered.

De Grey. Ay, and my request.

Lorne. To see the child?

De Grey. Even so: to look upon it;
Upon the thing that is of her; this bud—
This seedling of a flower so exquisite.
(*light is seen within.*)
Ha! light is in the chamber! moves the door?
Some one approaches. O! but for a moment
Let me behind thy friendly tartans be,
And snatch one glance of what that light will give.

(*Conceals himself behind* Lorne, Helen *appears, bearing a lamp, which she sets down as she advances.*)

Her form—her motion—yea, that mantled arm,
Pressed closely to her breast, as she was wont
When chilly winds assailed.—The face—O, woe is me!
It was not then so pale.

Lorne. (*to him, in a low voice.*) Begone: begone.

De Grey. Blest vision, I have seen thee! fare thee well! [Exit *in haste.*

Hel. (*coming forward, alarmed,*) What sound is that of steps that hasten from us?
Is Morton on the watch?

Lorne. Fear nothing; faithful Morton is at hand:
The steps thou heard'st were friendly.

Hel. (*embracing* Lorne.) My brother! meet we thus,—disguised, by stealth?
Is this like peace? How is my noble father?
Hath any ill befallen?

Lorne. Argyll is well;
And nothing ill, my sister, hath befallen,

If thou art well and happy.

Hel. Speakest thou truly?
Why art thou come? why thus upon our coast?
O take it not unkindly that I say,
"Why art thou come?"

Lorne. Near to the opposite shore,
With no design, but on a lengthened chase,
A lusty deer pursuing from the hills
Of Morven, where Sir Hubert and myself
Guests of the social lord two days had been,
We found us; when a sudden strong desire
To look upon the castle of Maclean,
Seen from the coast, our eager fancy seiz'd;
And that indulged, forthwith we did agree
The frith to cross, and to its chief and dame
A hasty visit make. But as our boat
Lay waiting to receive us, warned by one
Whom well I knew, the vassal of a friend,
Whose word I could not doubt, that jealous rancor,
Stirred up amongst the vassals of Maclean,
Who in their savage fury had been heard
To utter threats against thy innocent self,
Made it unsafe in open guise to venture;
Here in this garb we are to learn in secret
The state in which thou art.—How is it, then?
Morton's report has added to my fears;
All is not well with thee.

Hel. No, all is well.

Lorne. A cold constrained voice that answer gave.
All is not well,—Maclean—dares he neglect thee?

Hel. Nay, wrong him not; kind and affectionate
He still remains.

Lorne. But it is said, his vassals with vile names
Have dared to name thee, even in open clan,
And have remained unpunished. Is it so?
(*pauses.*) All is not well.

Hel. Have I not said it is?

Lorne. Ah! dost thou thus return a brother's love
With cold reserve?—speak to me, my Helen!
Speak as a sister should.—Have they insulted thee?
Has any wrong—my heart within me burns
If I but think upon it.—Answer truly.

Hel. What, am I questioned then? thinkest thou to find me
Like the spoiled heiress of some lowland Lord,
Peevish and dainty; who, with scorn regarding
The ruder home she is by marriage placed in,
Still holds herself an alien from its interest,
With poor repining, losing every sense
Of what she is, in what she has been? No.—
I love thee, Lorne; I love my father's house:
The meanest cur that round his threshold barks,
Is in my memory as some kindred thing:
Yet take it not unkindly when I say,
The lady of Maclean no grievance hath
To tell the Lord of Lorne.

Lorne. And has the vow,
Constrained, unblest, and joyless as it was,
Which gave thee to a Lord unworthy of thee,
Placed thee beyond the reach of kindred ties—
The warmth of blood to blood—the sure affection
That nature gives to all—a brother's love?
No, by all sacred things! here is thy hold:
Here is thy true, unshaken, native stay:
One that shall fail thee never, though, the while,
A faithless, wavering, intervening band
Seems to divide thee from it.
(*Grasping her hand vehemently, as if he would lead her away.*)

Hel. What dost thou mean? what violent grasp is this?
Comest thou to lead me from my husband's house,
Beneath the shade of night, with culprit's stealth?

Lorne. No, daughter of Argyll; when John of Lorne
Shall come to lead thee from these hated walls
Back to thy native home,—with culprit's stealth,
Beneath the shades of night, it shall not be.
With half our western warriors at his back
He'll proudly come. Thy listening timid chief
Shall hear our martial steps upon his heath,
With heavy measured fall, send, beat by beat
From the far smitten earth a sullen sound,
Like deep-dell'd forests groaning to the strokes
Of lusty wood-men. On the watch-tower's height,
His straining eye shall mark our sheathless swords
From rank to rank their lengthened blaze emit,
Like streams of shivering light in haste to change,
Upon the northern firmament.—By stealth?
No! not by stealth!—believe me, not by stealth
Shalt thou these portals pass.

Hel. Them have I entered
The pledge of peace: and here my place I'll hold
As dame and mistress of the warlike clan
Who yield obedience to their chief, my lord;
And whatsoe'er their will to me may bear,
Of good or ill, so will I hold me ever.
Yea, did the Lord of Lorne, dear as he is,
With all the warlike Campbells at his back
Here hostile entrance threaten; on these walls,
Failing the strength that might defend them better,
I would myself, while by my side in arms
One valiant clan's-man stood, against his powers,
To the last push, with desperate opposition,
This castle hold.

Lorne. And would'st thou so? so firm and valiant art thou?
Forgive me, noble creature!—oh! the fate—
The wayward fate that binds thy generous soul
To poor unsteady weakness!
Hel. Speakest thou thus?
Thus pressing still upon the galled spot?
Thou dealest unkindly with me. Yes, my brother,
Unkindly and unwisely. Wherefore hast thou
Brought to this coast the man thou knowest well
I ought not in mysterious guise to see?
And he himself—seeks he again to move
The hapless weakness I have strove to conquer?
I thought him generous.
Lorne. So think him still.
His wishes tend not to disturb thy peace:
Far other are his thoughts—He bids me tell thee,
To cheer thy gentle heart, nor think of him,
As one who will in vain and stubborn grief,
His ruin'd bliss lament,—he bids me say
That he will even strive, if it be possible,
Amongst the maidens of his land to seek
Some faint resemblance of the good he lost,
That thou mayest hear of him with less regret,
As one by holy bands link'd to his kind.
He bids me say, should ever child of his
And child of thine—but here his quivering lip
And starting tears spoke what he could not speak.
Hel. O, noble generous heart! and does he offer
Such cheering manly comfort? Heaven protect,
And guide, and bless him! on his noble head
Such prosperous bliss be pour'd, that, hearing of it,
Shall through the gloom of my untoward state
Like gleams of sun-shine break, that from afar
Look o'er the dull dun heath.
Lorne. But one request—
Hel. Ha! makes he one?
Lorne. It is to see thy child.
Hel. To see my child! will he indeed regard it?
Shall it be blessed by him?

Enter MORTON in haste.

Mor. Conceal yourself, my Lord, or by this passage (*pointing off the stage.*)
The nearest postern gain: I hear the sound
Of heavy steps at hand, and voices stern.
Hel. O fly, my brother! Morton will conduct thee. (*to* Morton.) Where is Sir Hubert?
Mor. Safe he is without.
Hel. Heaven keep him so! (*to* Lorne.) O leave me! I, the while,
Will in, and, with mine infant in mine arms,
Meet thee again, ere thou departest.—Fly! fly!
[EXEUNT, Helen *into the chamber, first putting out the lamp, and* Lorne *and* Morton *by a side passage.*

SCENE II.—A CAVE, LIGHTED BY FLAMING BRANDS STUCK ALOFT ON ITS RUGGED SIDES, AND SHEDDING A FIERCE GLARING LIGHT DOWN UPON THE OBJECTS BELOW.

LOCHTARISH, BENLORA, GLENFADDEN, with several of the chief vassals of MACLEAN, are discovered in a recess of the rocks, in earnest discourse, advancing slowly.

Loch. And thus, you see, by strong necessity,
We are compelled to this.
1st Vas. Perhaps thou'rt right.
Loch. Say'st thou *perhaps?* dost thou not plainly see
That ne'er a man amongst us can securely
His lands possess, or say, 'my house is mine,'
While, under tutorage of proud Argyll,
This beauteous sorceress our besotted chief,
By soft enchantment holds? my brave Glenore,
(*Laying his hand on* First Vassal.)
What are thy good deserts, that may uphold thee
In favor with a Campbell?—Duncan's blood,
Slain in his boat, with all its dashing oars
Skirting our shore, while that his vaunting piper
The Campbell's triumph played? will this speak for thee?
(*Turning to* Second Vassal.)
And Thona, what good merit pleadest thou?
The coal-black steed of Clone, thy moon-light plunder,
Ta'en from the spiteful laird, will he, good sooth!
Neigh favour on thee?
(*To* Third Vassal.) And my valiant Fallen,
Bethink thee well if fair-hair'd Flora's cries,
Whom from her native bower by force thou took'st,
Will plead for thee.—And say ye still *perhaps*—
Perhaps there is necessity?
1st Vas. Strong should it be, Lochtarish? for the act is fell, and cruel, thou would'st push us to.
Glen. (*to* 1st Vassal.) Ha, man of mercy! are thy lily hands
From bloody taint unstained? what sights were those
Thou look'dst upon in Brunock's burning tower,
When infants through the flames their wailings sent,
And yet unaided perished.
Loch. (*soothingly.*) Tush, Glenfadden!

Too hasty art thou. *(to the* Vassals.*)* Ye will say, belike,
'Our safety—our existence did demand
Utter extinction of that hold of foes.'
And well ye may.—A like necessity
Compels us now, and yet ye hesitate.

Glen. Our sighted seers the funeral lights have seen,
Not moving onward in the wonted path
On which by friends the peaceful dead are borne,
But hovering o'er the heath like countless stars,
Spent and extinguish'd on the very spot
Where first they twinkled. This too well foreshows
Interment of the slain, whose bloody graves
Of the same mould are made on which they fell.

2d Vas. Ha! so indeed! some awful tempest gathers.

1st Vas. What sighted man hath seen it?

Glen. He whose eye
Can see on northern waves the foundering bark,
With all her shrieking crew, sink to the deep.
While yet, with gentle winds, on dimpling surge
She sails from port in all her gallant trim:
John of the isle hath seen it.

All. *(starting back.)* Then hangs some evil over us.

Glen. Know ye not
The mermaid hath been heard upon our rocks?

All. *(still more alarmed.)* Ha! when?

Glen. Last night, upon the rugged crag
That lifts its dark head through the cloudy smoke
Of dashing billows, near the western cliff.
Sweetly, but sadly, o'er the stilly deep
The passing sound was borne. I need not say
How fatal to our clan that boding sound
Hath ever been.

3d Vas. In faith thou makest me quake.

2d Vas. Some fearful thing hangs o'er us—

1st Vas. If 'tis fated
Our clan before our ancient foe should fall,
Can we Heaven's will prevent? why should we then
The Campbells' wrath provoke?

Ben. *(stepping up fiercely to* First Vassal.*)*
Heaven's will prevent!—the Campbells' ire provoke!
Is such base tameness uttered by the son
Of one, who would into the fiery pit
Of damned fiends have leapt, so that his grasp
Might pull a Campbell with him? bastard blood!
Thy father spoke not thus.

Loch. *(soothingly:)* Nay, brave Benlora:
He means not as thou thinkest.

Ben. If Heaven decrees
Slaughter and ruin for us, come it then!
But let our enemies, close grappled to us,
In deadly strife, their ruin join with ours.
Let corse to corse, upon the bloody heath,
Maclean and Campbell, stiffening side by side,
With all the gnashing ecstasy of hate
Upon their ghastly visages imprest,
Lie horribly!—For every widow's tear
Shed in our clan let matron Campbells howl.

Loch. Indeed, my friends, although too much in fire,
Benlora wisely speaks.—Shall we in truth
Wait for our ruin from a crafty foe,
Who here maintains this keenly watchful spy
In gentle kindness masked?

Glen. Nor need we fear,
As good Lochtarish hath already urged,
Her death will rouse Argyll. It will be deemed,
As we shall grace it with all good respect
Of funeral pomp, a natural visitation.

Loch. Ay, and besides, we'll swear upon the book,
And truly swear, if we are called upon,
We have not shed her blood.

Ben. I like not this.
If ye her life will take, in open day
Let her a public sacrifice be made.
Let the loud trumpet far and near proclaim
Our bloody feast, and at the rousing sound
Let every clansman of the hated name
His vengeful weapon clench———
I like it not, Lochtarish. What we do,
Let it be boldly done.—Why should we slay her?
Let her in shame be from the castle sent;
Which to her haughty sire will do, I ween,
Far more despite than taking of her life.—
A feeble woman's life!—I like it not. *(turning and walking angrily to a distance.)*

Loch. *(to* Glenfadden.*)* Go to him, friend, and soothe him to our purpose.
The fiery fool! how madly wild he is!
(Glenfadden *goes and speaks to* Benlora, *while* Lochtarish *speaks to the* Vassals *on the front.*)

Loch. My friends, why on each other look ye thus
In gloomy silence? freely speak your thoughts.
Mine have I freely spoken: that advising
Which for the good—nay, I must say existence,
Of this our ancient clan most needful is.
When did Lochtarish ever for himself
A separate 'vantage seek, in which the clan
At large partook not? am I doubted now?

2d Vas. No, nothing do we doubt thy public zeal.

Loch. Then is my long experience o' the sudden
To childish folly turned? Think'st thou, good Thona,
We should beneath this artful mistress live,
Hushed in deceitful peace, till John of Lorne,
For whom the office of a treacherous spy
She doth right slyly manage, with his powers
Shall come upon us? once ye would have spurned
At thoughts so base; but now, when forth I stand
To do what vengeance, safety, nay, existence
All loudly call for; even as though already

The enemy's baleful influence hung o'er ye,
Like quelled and passive men ye silent stand.

1st Vas. (*roused.*) Nay, cease, Lochtarish!
Quell'd and passive men thou know'st we are not.

Loch. Yet a woman's life,
And that a treacherous woman, moves ye thus.
Bold as your threats of dark revenge have been,
A strong decisive deed appals ye now,
Our chieftain's feeble undetermined spirit
Infects you all: ye dare not stand by me.

All. We dare not, sayest thou?

Loch. Dare not, will I say!
Well spoke the jeering Camerons, I trow,
As past their fishing boats our vessel steer'd,
When with push'd lip, and finger pointing thus,
They call'd our crew the Campbell-cow'd Macleans.

All. (*roused fiercely.*) The Campbell-cow'd Macleans!

2d Vas. Infernal devils!
Dare they to call us so?

Loch. Ay, by my truth!
Nor think that from the Camerons alone
Ye will such greeting have, if back ye shrink,
And stand not by me now.

All. (*eagerly.*) We'll stand! we'll stand!

2d Vas. Tempt us no more:—there's ne'er a man of us
That will not back thee boldly.

Loch. Ay, indeed!
Now are ye men!—give me your hands to this.
(*they all give him their hands.*)
Now am I satisfied. (*looking off.*) The chief approaches.
Ye know full well the spirit of the man
That we must deal withall; therefore be bold.

All. Mistrust us not.

Enter MACLEAN, who advances to the centre, while LOCHTARISH, BENLORA, GLENFADDEN, and all the other vassals gather round him with stern determined looks. A pause; MACLEAN eyeing them all round with inquisitive anxiety.

Mac. A goodly meeting at this hour convened. (*a sullen pause.*)
Benlora; Thona; Allen of Glenore;
And all of you, our first and bravest kinsmen;
What mystery in this sullen silence is?
Hangs any threatened evil o'er the clan?

Ben. Yes, chieftain; evil that doth make the blood
Within your grey-haired warriors' veins to burn,
And their brogued feet to spurn the ground that bears them.

Loch. Evil that soon will wrap your tower in flames,
Your ditches fill with blood, and carrion birds
Glut with the butchered corses of your slain.

Glen. Ay, evil that doth make the hoary locks
Of sighted men around their age-worn scalps
Like quickened points of crackling flame to rise;
Their teeth to grind, and strained eye-balls roll
In fitful frenzy, at the horrid things,
In terrible array, before them raised.

1st Vas. The mermaid hath been heard upon our rocks:
The fatal song of waves.

Glen. The northern deep
Is heard with distant moanings from our coast,
Uttering the dismal bodeful sounds of death.

2d Vas. The funeral lights have shone upon our heath,
Marking in countless groups the heaps of thousands.

Ben. Yea, chief; and sounds like to thy father's voice
Have from the sacred mould wherein he lies,
At dead of night, by wakeful men been heard
Three times distinctly. (*to* Glenfadden.)
Sayd'st thou not thrice?

Glen. Yes; three times heard distinctly.

Mac. Ye much amaze me, friends.—Such things have been.

Loch. Yea, chief; and think'st thou we may lightly deem
Of coming ills, by signs like these forewarned?

Mac. Then an it be, high Heaven have mercy on us!

Loch. (*in a solemn voice.*) Thyself have mercy on us!

Mac. How is this?
Your words confuse and stun me.—Have I power
To ward this evil off!

All. Thou hast! thou hast!

Mac. Then God to me show mercy in my need,
As I will do for you and for my clan
Whate'er my slender power enables me.

All. Amen! and swear to it.

Mac. (*starting back.*) What words are these,
With such wild fierceness uttered? name the thing
That ye would have me do.

Ben. (*stepping forward.*) Ay, we will name it.
Helen the Campbell, fostered in your bosom,
A serpent is, who wears a hidden sting
For thee and all thy name; the oath-bound spy
Of dark Argyll, our foe; the baleful plague
To which ill omened sounds and warnings point,
As that on which existence or extinction—
The name and being of our clan depend;
A witch of deep seduction.—Cast her forth.
The strange, unnatural union of two bloods
Adverse and hostile, most abhorred is.
The heart of every warrior of your name
Rises against it. Yea, the grave calls out,
And says it may not be.—Nay, shrink not, chief,
When I again repeat it;—cast her off.

Mac. Art thou a man? and bid'st me cast her off,
Bound as I am by sacred holy ties?

Loch. Bound as thou art by that which thou regardest
As sacred holy ties; what tie so sacred
As those that to his name and kindred vassals
The noble chieftain bind? if ties there be
To these opposed, although a saint from heaven
Had bless'd them o'er the cross'd and holy things,
They are annulled and broken.

Ben. Ay, Lochtarish;
Sound doctrine hast thou uttered. Such the creed
Of ancient warriors was, and such the creed
That we their sons will with our swords maintain,
(*Drawing his sword fiercely, whilst the rest follow his example.*)

Mac. Ye much confound me with your violent words.
I can in battle strive, as well ye know;
But how to strive with you, ye violent men,
My spirit knows not.

Loch. Decide—decide, Maclean: the choice is thine
To be our chieftain, leading forth thy bands,
As heretofore thy valiant father did,
Against our ancient foe, or be the husband,
Despised, forsaken, curst, of her thou prizest
More than thy clan and kindred.

Glen. Make thy choice.
Benlora, wont in better times, to lead us
Against the Campbells, with a chieftain's power,
Shall, with the first blast of his warlike horn,
If so he wills it, round his standard gather
Thy roused and valiant vassals to a man.

Mac. (*greatly startled.*) Ha, go your thoughts to this? desert me so?
My vassals so desert me?

Loch. Ay, by my faith our very women too:
And in your hall remain, to serve your state,
Nor child nor aged crone.

Mac. (*after great agitation.*) Decide, and cast her off!—how far the thoughts
To which these words ye yoke, may go, I guess not.
(*eagerly.*) They reach not to her life? (*pauses and looks at them anxiously, but they are silent.*)
Oh, oh! oh, oh! that stern and dreadful silence!

Loch. We will not shed her blood.

Mac. Then ye will spare her.

Loch. Commit her to our keeping: ask us not
How we shall deal with her.

Mac. Some fearful mystery is in your words,
Which covers cruel things. O woe the day,
That I on this astounding ridge am poised!
On every side a fearful ruin yawns.
(*A voice heard without, uttering wild incoherent words, mixed with shrieks of horror.*)
What frenzied voice is that?

Enter 4th VASSAL, as if terribly frightened.

Loch. (*to* 4th Vassal.) What brings thee hither?

4th Vas. He fixes wildly on the gloomy void
His starting eye-balls, bent on fearful sights,
That makes the sinews of his aged limbs
In agony to quiver

Loch. Who did'st thou say?

4th Vas. John of the isle, the sighted awful man.
Go, see yourselves: i' the outer cave he is.
Entranced he stands; arrested on his way
By horrid visions, as he hurried hither
Inquiring for the chief.
(*a voice heard without, as before.*)

Loch. Hark! hark, again! dread powers are dealing with him.
Come, chieftain—come and see the awful man.
If heaven or hell have power to move thy will,
Thou canst not now withstand us.
(*pauses.*) Hear'st thou not?
And motionless?

Mac. I am beset and stunn'd,
And every sense bewilder'd. Violent men!
If ye unto this fearful pitch are bent,—
When such necessity is prest upon me,
What doth avail resistance? woe the day!
E'en lead me where ye will.

[EXIT Maclean, *exhausted and trembling, leaning on* Lochtarish, *and followed by* Benlora *and* Glenfadden *and* Vassals—*two* Vassals *remain.*

1st Vas. (*looking after* Maclean.) Ay, there he goes; so spent, and scared, and feeble!
Without a prophet's skill, we may foretel,
John of the isle, by sly Lochtarish taught,
Will work him soon to be an oath-bound wretch
To this their fell design. Are all things ready?

2d Vas. All is in readiness.

1st Vas. When ebbs the tide?

2d Vas. At early dawn, when in the narrow creek,
Near to the castle, with our trusty mates,
Our boat must be in waiting to receive her.

1st Vas. The time so soon! alas, so young and fair
That slow and dismal death! to be at once
Plunged in the closing deep many have suffered,
But to sit waiting on a lonely rock
For the approaching tide to throttle her—
But that she is a Campbell, I could weep.

2d Vas. Weep, fool! think soon how we'll to war again
With our old enemy, and in the field
Our good claymores reek with their hated blood:
Think upon this, and change thy tears to joy.
[EXEUNT.

SCENE III.—THE BED CHAMBER OF MACLEAN.

Enter MACLEAN, followed by HELEN.

Hel. Ah! wherefore art thou so disturbed? the night
Is almost spent: the morn will break ere long,
And rest hast thou had none. Go to thy bed:
I pray thee go.

Mac. I cannot: urge me not.

Hel. Nay, try to rest: I'll sit and watch by thee.

Mac. Thou'lt sit and watch! O woe betide the hour!
And who will watch for thee?

Hel. And why for me?
Can any harm approach? when thou art near,
Or sleeping or awake, I am secure.

Mac. (*pacing to and fro distractedly.*) O God! O God!

Hel. Those exclamations! (*going up to him while he avoids her.*) Turn'st thou from me thus?
Have I offended? dost thou doubt my faith?
Hath any jealous thought——I freely own
Love did not make me thine: but, being thine,
To no love-wedded dame, bound in the ties
Of dearest sympathy, will I in duty—
In steady, willing, cheerful duty yield.
Yea, and though here no thrilling rapture be,
I look to spend with thee, by habit foster'd,
The evening of my days in true affection.

Mac. The evening of thy days! alas, alas!
Would heaven had so decreed it! (*pulling his hand from hers.*) Grasp me not!
It is a fiend thou cling'st to. (*a knock at the door.*) Power of heaven!
Are they already at the chamber door!

Hel. Are those who knock without unwelcome?—hush!
Withdraw thyself, and I will open to them. (*goes to the door.*)

Mac. O go not! go not!

(*Runs after her to draw her back, when a* Vassal, *rushing from behind the bed, lays hold of him.*)

Vas. Art thou not sworn to us: where is thy faith?

Mac. I know, I know! the bands of hell have bound me.
O fiends! ye've made of me—what words can speak
The hateful wretch I am! hark, hark! she cries!
She shrieks and calls on me!

(Helen's *cries heard without, first near and distinct, afterwards more and more distant as they bear her away; while the* Vassal *leads* Maclean *forcibly off by the opposite side, he breaks from him, and hastens towards that by which* Helen *went out.*)

Vas. Thou art too strong for me. Do as thou wilt;
But if thou bring'st her back, even from that moment
Benlora is our leader, and thyself,
The Campbell's husband, chieftain and Maclean
No more shalt be. We've sworn as well as thou.

(Maclean *stops irresolutely, and then suffers the* Vassal *to lead him off.*)

ACT III.

SCENE I.—A SMALL ISLAND, COMPOSED OF A RUGGED CRAGGY ROCK IN FRONT, AND THE SEA IN THE DISTANCE.

Enter two VASSALS dragging in HELEN, as if just come out of their boat.

Hel. O, why is this? speak, gloomy, ruthless men!
Our voyage ends not here?

1st Vas. It does: and now,
Helen, the Campbell, fare thee—fare thee well!

2d Vas. Helen, the Campbell, thy last greeting take
From mortal thing.

Hel. What! leave me on this rock,
This sea-girt rock, to solitude and famine?

1st Vas. Next rising tide will bring a sure relief
To all the ills we leave thee.

Hel. (*starting.*) I understand ye (*raising her clasped hands to heaven.*) Lord of heaven and earth;
Of storms and tempests, and th' unfathom'd deep;
Is this thy righteous will? (*grasping the hands of the men.*) Ye cannot mean it;
Ye cannot leave a human creature thus
To perish by a slow approaching end,
So awful and so terrible. Instant death
Were merciful to this.

1st Vas. If thou prefer'st it, we can shorten well
Thy term of pain and terrour: from this cragg,
Full fourteen fathom deep, thou may'st be plunged.
In shorter time than three strokes of an oar
Thy pains will cease.

2d Vas. Come, that were better for thee.

(*Both of them seize her hands, and are going to hurry her to the brink of the rock, when she shrinks back.*)

Hel. O no! the soul recoils from swift destruction!
Pause ye a while. (*considering for a moment.*)
The downward terrible plunge!
The coil of whelming waves?—O fearful nature!
(*catching hold of a part of the rock near her.*)
To the rough rock I'll cling: it still is something

Of firm and desperate hold. Depart and leave me.
(*Waving her hand for the* Vassals *to go, whilst she keeps close hold of the rock with the other.*)

1st Vas. Thou still may'st live within a prison pent,
Life is dear to thee.

Hel. (*eagerly.*) If life is dear!—alas, it is not dear!
Although the passing fearful act of death
So very fearful is——Say how, even in a prison,
I still may wait my quiet natural end.

1st Vas. Whate'er thou art, such has thy conduct been,
Thy wedded faith, ev'n with thy fellest foes,
Sure and undoubted stands:—sign thou this scroll,
Owning the child, thy son, of bastard birth;
And this made sure, Lochtarish bade me say
Thy life shall yet be spared.

Hel. (*pushing him away with indignation, as he offers her the scroll.*) Off, off!
vile agent of a wretch so devilish!
Now do I see from whence my ruin comes:
I and my infant foil his wicked hopes.
O harmless babe! will Heaven abandon thee!
It will not!—no; it will not!
(*assuming firmness and dignity.*)
Depart and leave me. In my rising breast
I feel returning strength. Heaven aids my weakness:
I'll meet its awful will.
(*waving them off with her hand.*)

1st Vas. Well, in its keeping rest thee: fare thee well,
Helen, the Campbell.

2d Vas. Be thy sufferings short!
Come, quickly let us go, nor look behind,
Fell is the service we are put upon:
Would we had never ta'en that cruel oath!
[Exeunt Vassals.

Hel. (*after standing some time gazing round her, paces backwards and forwards with agitated steps, then, stopping suddenly, bends her ear to the ground as if she listened earnestly to something.*) It is the sound; the heaving hollow swell
That notes the turning tide. Tremendous agent!
Mine executioner, that, step by step,
Advances to the awful work of death.
Onward it wears: a little space removed
The dreadful conflict is. (*Raising her eyes to heaven, and moving her lips, as in the act of devotion, before she again speaks aloud.*)
Thou art i' th' blue coped sky—th' expanse immeasurable;
I' the dark roll'd clouds, the thunder's awful home:
Thou art i' the wide shored earth,—the pathless desert;
And in the dread immensity of waters,—
I' the fathomless deep thou art.——
Awful but excellent! beneath thy hand,
With trembling confidence, I bow me low,
And wait thy will in peace. (*Sits down on a crag of a rock, with her arms crossed over her breast in silent resignation—then, after a pause of some length, raises her head hastily.*)
It is a sound of voices in the wind?
The breeze is on the rock: a gleam of sunshine
Breaks through those farther clouds. It is like hope
Upon a hopeless state. (*Starting up, and gazing eagerly around her.*)
I'll to that highest crag and take my stand:
Some little speck upon the distant wave
May to my eager gaze a vessel grow—
Some onward wearing thing,—some boat—some raft—
Some drifted plank.——O hope! thou quit'st us never!
[Exit, *disappearing amongst the rugged divisions of the rock.*

Scene II.—A small island from which the former is seen in the distance, like a little pointed rock standing out of the sea.

Enter Sir Hubert de Grey, followed by two Fishermen.

De Grey. This little swarded spot that o'er the waves,
Cloth'd in its green light, seem'd to beckon to us,
Right pleasant is: until our comrades join,
Here will we rest. I marvel much they stand
So far behind. In truth, such lusty rowers
Put shame upon their skill.

1st Fish. A cross-set current bore them from the track,
But see, they now bear on us rapidly.

Voices. (*without.*) Hola!

2d Fish. They call to us. Hola! hola!
How fast they wear! they are at hand already.

De Grey. Right glad I am: the Lord of Lorne, I fear,
Will wait impatiently: he has already
With rapid oars the nearer main land gain'd,
Where he appointed us to join him. Ho!
(*calling off the stage.*)
Make to that point, my lads.
(*to those near him.*)
Here, for a little while, upon the turf
We'll snatch a hasty meal, and, so refresh'd,
Take to our boats again.

Enter three other Fishermen, as from their boat on the other side.

Well met, my friends! I'm glad you're here at last.
How was it that you took that distant track?

3d Fish. The current bore us wide of what we wist;
And, were it not your honour is impatient
Main land to make, we had not come so soon.

De Grey. What had detained you?
3d Fish. As near yon rock we bore, that o'er the waves
Just shows its jetty point, and will, ere long,
Beneath the tide be hid, we heard the sound
Of feeble lamentation.
De Grey. A human voice?
3d Fish. I cannot think it was;
For on that rock, sea-girt, and at high tide,
Sea-cover'd, human thing there cannot be;
Though at the first it sounded in our ears
Like a faint woman's voice.
De Grey. Perceived ye aught?
3d Fish. Yes; something white that moved, and, as we think,
Some wounded bird that there hath dropp'd its wing,
And cannot make its way.
4th Fish. Perhaps some dog,
Whose master at low water there hath been,
And left him.
3d Fish. Something 'tis in woeful case,
Whate'er it be. Right fain I would have gone
To bear it off.
De Grey. (*eagerly.*) And wherefore did'st thou not?
Return and save it. Be it what it may;
Something it is, lone and in jeopardy,
Which hath a feeling of its desperate state,
And therefore doth to woe worn, fearful man,
A kindred nature bear. Return, good friend:—
Quickly return and save it, ere the tide
Shall wash it from its hold. I to the coast
Will steer the while, and wait your coming there.
3d Fish. Right gladly, noble sir.
4th Fish. We'll gladly go:
For, by my faith! at night I had not slept
For thinking of that sound.
De Grey. Heaven speed ye then! whate'er ye bring to me
Of living kind, I will reward ye for it.
Our different tracks we hold; nor longer here
Will I remain. Soon may we meet: God speed ye! [Exeunt *severally.*

Scene III.—A Fisherman's House on the Main Land.

Enter John of Lorne and Sir Hubert de Grey.

Lorne. Then wait thou for thy boat; I and my men
Will onward to the town, where, as I hope,
My trusty vassals and our steeds are stationed.
But lose not time.
De Grey. Fear not; I'll follow quickly.
Lorne. I must unto the castle of Argyll
Without delay proceed; therefore, whate'er
Of living kind, bird, beast, or creeping thing,
This boat of thine produces, bring it with thee;
And were it eaglet fierce, or wolf or fox,
On with us shall it travel, mounted bravely,
Our homeward cavalcade to grace. Farewell!
De Grey. Farewell, my friend! I shall not long delay
Thy homeward journey.
Lorne. (*calling off.*) But, ho! good host and hostess! (*to* De Grey.) ere I go
I must take leave of honest Duncan here,
And of his rosy wife. Ay, here they come.

Enter the Host and his Wife.

Farewell, my friends, and thanks be to ye both!
Good cheer, and kindly given, of you we've had.
Thy hand, good host. May all the fish o' th' ocean
Come crowding to thy nets!—and healthy brats,
Fair dame, have thou! with such round rosy cheeks
As brats of thine befit: and, by your leave, (*kissing her.*)
So be they kiss'd by all kind comers too!
Good luck betide ye both!
Host. And, sir, to you the same. Who-e'er you be,
A brave man art thou, that I will be sworn.
Wife. Come you this way again, I hope, good sir,
You will not pass our door.
Lorne. Fear not, good hostess;
It is a pleasant, sunny, open door,
And bids me enter of its own accord;
I cannot pass it by. Good luck betide ye!
[Exit, *followed to the door by* Sir Hubert.
Host. I will be sworn it is some noble chieftain,
Though homely be his garb.
Wife. Ay, so will I: the Lord of Lorne himself
Could not more courteous be.
Host. Hush, hush! be quiet!
We live not now amongst the Campbells, wife.
Should some Maclean o'erhear thee—hush, I say.
(*eyeing* De Grey, *who returns from the door.*)
And this man too; right noble is his mien;
He is no common rambler. (*to* De Grey.) By your leave,
If I may be so bold without offending,
Your speech, methinks, smacks of a southern race;
I guess at least of lowland kin ye be.
But think no shame of this; we'll ne'ertheless
Regard thee: thieves and cowards be not all
Who from the lowlands come.
Wife. No; no, in sooth! I knew a lowlander,
Some years gone by, who was as true and honest—
Ay, and I do believe well nigh as brave,
As though, with brogued feet, he never else
Had all his days than muir or mountain trode.
De Grey. Thanks for your gentle thoughts! —it has indeed
Been my misluck to draw my earliest breath

Where meadows flower, and cornfields wave
i' the sun.
But let us still be friends! Heaven gives us
not
To choose our birth-place, else these wilds, no
doubt,
Would be more thickly peopled.

Host. Ay, true it is indeed.

Wife. And hard it were
To quarrel with him too for his misfortune.
(noise heard without.)

De Grey. Ha! tis my boat return'd.

Enter 1st Fisherman.

1st Fish. Ay, here we are.

De Grey. And aught saved from the rock?

1st Fish. Yes, by my faith! but neither
bird nor beast.
Look there, my master, *(pointing to the door.)*

Enter Helen, extremely exhausted, and almost senseless, wrapt closely up in one of their plaids, and supported by the other two fishermen.

De Grey. A woman! Heaven in mercy!
was it then
A human creature there exposed to perish?

1st Fish. *(opening the plaid to show her face.)* Ay, look; and such a crea-
ture!

De Grey. *(starting back.)* Helen of Argyll!
O God! was this the feeble wailing voice!
(Clasping his arms about her knees as she stands almost senseless, supported by the fishermen, and bursting into tears.)
Could heart of man so leave thee? thou, of
all
That lovely is, most lovely. Woe is me!
Some aid, I pray ye. *(to* Host *and his* Wife.)
Bear her softly in,
And wrap warm garments round her.
Breathes she freely?
Her eyes half open are, but life, alas!
Is almost spent, and holds within her breast
A weak uncertain seat. (Helen *moves her hand.*) She moves her hand:—
She knows my voice. O Heaven in mercy
save her!
Bear her more gently, pray ye:—softly, soft-
ly!
How weak and spent she is!

1st Fish. No marvel she is weak: we reach'd
her not
Until the swelling waters laved her girdle.
And then to see her——

De Grey. Cease, I pray thee, friend,
And tell me not———

2d Fish. Nay, faith; he tells you true:
She stood above the water, with stretched
arms
Clung to the dripping rock, like the white
pinions—

De Grey. Peace, peace, I say! thy words
are agony:
Give to my mind no image of the thing!
[Exeunt, *bearing* Helen *into an inner part of the house.*

ACT IV.

Scene I.—A small gothic hall or anti-room, in Argyll's castle, a door leading to the apartment of the Earl, before which is discovered the Piper, pacing backwards and forwards, playing on his bagpipe.

Enter Dugald.

Dug. Now pray thee, piper, cease! that
stunning din
Might do good service by the ears to set
Two angry clans; but for a morning's rouse,
Here at an old man's door, it does, good
sooth,
Exceed all reasonable use. The Earl
Has past a sleepless night: I pray thee now
Give o'er, and spare thy pains.

Piper. And spare my pains, say'st thou?—
I'll do mine office,
As long as breath within my body is.

Dug. Then mercy on us all! if wind thou
mean'st,
There is within that sturdy trunk of thine,
Old as it is, a still exhaustless store.
A Lapland witch's bag could scarcely match
it.
Thou could'st, I doubt not, belly out the sails
Of a thrice-masted vessel with thy mouth:
But be thy mercy equal to thy might!
I pray thee now give o'er: in faith the earl
Has past a sleepless night.

Piper. Think'st thou I am a lowland, day-
hired minstrel,
To play or stop at bidding? is Argyll
The lord and chieftain of our ancient clan,
More certainly than I to him, as such,
The high hereditary piper am?
A sleepless night, forsooth! he's slept full oft
On the hard heath, with fifty harness'd
steeds
Champing their fodder round him;—soundly
too.
I'll do mine office, loun, chafe as thou wilt.
(continuing to pace up and down, and play as before.)

Dug. Nay, thou the chafer art, red-crested
cock!
The Lord of Lorne has spoilt thee with indulg-
ing
Thy wilful humors. Cease thy cursed din!
See; here the Earl himself comes forth to
chide thee. [Exit.

Enter Argyll, attended, from the chamber.

Arg. Good morrow, piper! thou hast
roused me bravely:
A younger man might gird his tartans on
With lightsome heart to martial sounds like
these,
But I am old.

Piper. O no, my noble chieftain!

It is not age subdues you.
Arg. No; what else?
Piper. Alack, the flower and blossom of your house
The wind hath blown away to other towers.
When she was here, and gladsome faces brighten'd
With looking on her, and around your board
Sweet lays were sung, and gallants in the hall
Footed it trimly to our varied measures,
There might, indeed, be found beneath your roof
Those who might reckon years fourscore and odds,
But of old folks, I warrant, ne'er a soul.
No; we were all young then.
Arg. (*sighing deeply*.) Tis true, indeed
It was even as thou say'st. Our earthly joys
Fly like the blossoms scatter'd by the wind.

Enter a SERVANT.

Serv. Please ye, my Lord;———
Some score of Vassals in the hall attend
To bid good morrow to you, and the hour
Wears late: the chamberlain hath bade me say
He will dismiss them, if it please your honour.
Arg. Nay, many a mile have some of them, I know,
With suit or purpose lurking in their minds,
Rode o'er rough paths to see me; disappointed
Shall none of them return. I'm better now.
I have been rather weary than unwell.
Say, I will see them presently.
[EXIT Servant.

Re-enter DUGALD in haste.

Thou comest with a busy face: what tidings?
Dug. The Lord of Lorne's arrived, an' please your honour:
Sir Hubert too, and all their jolly train;
And with them have they brought a lady, closely
In hood and mantle muffled: ne'er a glimpse
May of her face be seen.
Arg. A lady, say'st thou?
Dug. Yes; closely muffled up.
Arg. (*pacing up and down, somewhat disturbed*.)
I like not this.———It cannot surely be.—
(*stopping short, and looking hard at* Dugald.)
Whence comes he?
Dug. He a hunting went, I know,
To Cromack's ancient laird, whose youthful dame
So famed for beauty is; but whence he comes,
I cannot tell, my Lord.
Arg. (*pacing up and down, as he speaks to himself in broken sentences very much disturbed*.)
To Cromack's ancient laird!—if that indeed—
Beshrew me, if it be!—I 'd rather lose
Half of my lands than son of mine such wrong,
Such shameful wrong, should do. This sword I've drawn
Like robbery to revenge, ne'er to abet it:
And shall I now with hoary locks———no, no!—
My noble Lorne! he cannot be so base.

Enter LORNE, going up to ARGYLL with agitation.

Arg. (*eyeing him suspiciously*.) Well, John, how is it? welcome art thou home,
If thou return'st, as well I would believe,
Deserving of a welcome.
Lorne. Doubts my Lord that I am so returned?
(*Aside to* Argyll, *endeavouring to draw him apart from his attendants*.)
Your ear, my father.
Let these withdraw: I have a thing to tell you.
Arg. (*looking still more suspiciously upon* Lorne, *from seeing the eagerness and agitation with which he speaks, and turning from him indignantly*.) No, by this honest blade! if wrong thou'st done,
Thou hast no shelter here. In open day,
Before th' assembled Vassals shalt thou tell it;
And he, whom thou hast injured, be redrest,
While I have power to bid my Campbells fight
I' the fair and honour'd cause.
Lorne. I pray, my Lord, will you vouchsafe to hear me?
Arg. Thoughtless boy!
How far unlike the noble Lorne I thought thee!—
Proud as I am, far rather would I see thee
Join'd to the daughter of my meanest Vassal,
Than see thy manly, noble worth engaged
In such foul raid as this.
Lorne. Nay, nay! be pacified!
I'd rather take, in faith, the tawny hand
Of homeliest maid, that doth o' holidays,
Her sun-burnt locks with worsted ribbon bind,
Fairly and freely won, than brightest dame
That e'er in stately bower or regal hall
In graceful beauty shone, gain'd by such wrong—
By such base treachery as you have glanced at.
These are plain words: then treat me like a man
Who hath been wont the manly truth to speak.
Arg. Ha, now thy countenance and tone again
Are John of Lorne's. That look, and whispering voice
So strange appear'd, in truth I liked it not.
Give me thy hand. Where is the stranger dame?
If she in trouble be——

Lorne. (*aside.*) Make these withdraw, and I will lead her hither.

[EXIT, *while the* Earl *waves his hand, and* Dugald *and* Attendants, *&c. go out:—presently re-enter* Lorne, *leading in* Helen, *covered closely up in a mantle.*

Lorne. This is the dame, who, houseless and deserted,
Seeks shelter here, nor fears to be rejected.

Helen. (*sinking down, and clasping* Argyll's *knees.*)
My father!

Arg. That voice!—O God!—unveil, unveil, for mercy! (*tearing off the mantle that conceals her.*)
My child! my Helen! (*clasping her to his heart, and holding her there for some time, unable to speak.*)
My child! my dearest child! my soul! my pride!
Deserted!—houseless!—com'st thou to me thus?
Here is thy house—thy home: this aged bosom
Thy shelter is, which thou shalt quit no more.
My child! my child!
(*Embracing her again.*—Helen *and he weeping upon one another's necks.*)
Houseless! deserted!—'neath the cope of heaven
Breathes there a wretch who could desert thee? Speak,
If he hath so abused his precious trust,
If he—it makes me tear these hoary locks
To think what I have done!—O thoughtless father;
Thoughtless and selfish too!
(*Tearing his hair, beating his forehead with all the violent gestures of rage and grief.*)

Helen. Oh, oh! forbear! it was not you, my father,
I gave myself away: I did it willingly:
We acted both for good; and now your love
Repays me richly—stands to me instead
Of many blessings. Noble Lorne, besides—
O, he hath been to me so kind—so tender!
(*Taking her* brother's *hand, and pressing it to her breast—then joining her* father's *to it, and pressing them both ardently to her lips.*)
Say not I am deserted: Heaven hath chid me—
Hath chid me sorely; but hath blest me too.
O, dearly blest me!

Arg. Hath chid thee sorely! how I burn to hear it!
What hast thou suffer'd?

Lorne. We will not tell thee now. Go to thy chamber,
And be a while composed. We have, my father,
A tale to tell that will demand of thee
Recruited strength to hear. We'll follow thee.

[EXEUNT Lorne, *supporting his* father *an* Helen *into the chamber.*

SCENE II.—THE GARDEN OF THE CASTLE.

Enter ARGYLL, LORNE, and Sir HUBERT DE GREY, speaking as they enter.

Lorne. A month!—a week or two!—no, not an hour
Would I suspend our vengeance. Such atrocity
Makes e'en the little term between our summons
And the dark crowding round our martial pipes,
Of plumed bonnets nodding to the wind,
Most tedious seem: yea, makes the impatient foot
To smite the very earth beneath its tread,
For being fixt and ertless.

Arg. Be less impatient, John: thou canst not doubt
A father's keen resentment of such wrong:
But let us still be wise; this short delay
Will make revenge the surer; to its aim
A just direction give.

De Grey. The Earl is right:
We shall but work in the dark, impatient Lorne,
If we too soon begin.

Arg. How far Maclean
Hath to this horrible attempt consented,
Or privy been, we may be certified,
By waiting silently to learn the tale
That he will tell us of his Lady's loss,
When he shall send to give us notice of it,
As doubtless soon he will.

De Grey. If he, beset and threatened, to those fiends,
Unknowing of their purpose, hath unwillingly
Committed her, he will himself, belike,
If pride prevent him not, your aid solicit
To set him free from his disgraceful thraldom.

Lorne. And if he should, shrunk be this sinew'd arm,
If it unsheath a weapon in his cause!
Let every ragged strippling on his lands
In wanton mockery mouth him with contempt!
Benlora head his Vassals; and Lochtarish—
That serpent, full of every devilish wile,
His prison keeper and his master be!

De Grey. Ay; and the keeper also of his son,
The infant heir.

Lorne. (*starting.*) I did not think of this.

Arg. Then let thy head-strong fury pause upon it.
Thanks to Sir Hubert's prudence! thou as yet
Before thy followers hast restrained been;
And who this lady is, whom to the castle,
Like a mysterious stranger, ye have brought,
From them remains conceal'd. My brave De Grey!
This thy considerate foresight, join'd to all

Thy other service in this woeful matter,
Hath made us much thy debtor.

De Grey. I have, indeed, my Lord, considered only
What I believed would Helen's wishes be,
Ere she herself could utter them; if this
Hath proved equivalent to wiser foresight,
Let it direct us still; let Helen's wishes
Your measures guide.

Arg. Ah, brave De Grey! would they had ever done so!
I had not now——(*taking* Sir Hubert's *hand with emotion.*) Forgive me, noble youth!
Alas, alas, the father's tenderness
Before the chieftain's policy gave way,
And all this wreck hath been.

Lorne. 'Tis even so.
That cursed peace; that coward's shadeless face
Of smiles and promises, to all things yielding
With weak, unmanly pliancy, so gain'd you——
Even you, the wise Argyll!—it made me mad!
Who hath no point that he maintains against you,
No firmness hath to hold him of your side:
Who cannot sturdily against me stand.
And say, 'encroach no farther,' friend of mine
Shall never be.

De Grey. Nay, Lorne, forbear—forbear!
Thine own impetuous wilfulness did make
The other's pliant mind more specious seem;
And thou thyself did'st to that luckless union,
Although unwittingly, assistance lend.
Make now amends for it, and curb thy spirit.
While that the earl with calmer judgment waits
His time for action.

Lorne. Beshrew me, but thy counsel strangely smacks
Of cautious timid age! in faith, De Grey,
But that I know thy noble nature well,
I could believe thee——

Arg. Peace, unruly spirit!
Bold as thou art, methinks, with locks like these,
Thy father still may say to thee, 'be silent!'

Lorne. (*checking himself, and bowing very low to* Argyll.) And be obeyed, devoutly. O forgive me!
Those locks are to your brows a kingly fillet
Of strong authority, to which my heart
No rebel is, though rude may be my words.
(*taking* Sir Hubert's *hand with an assured countenance.*)
I ask not thee, De Grey, to pardon me.
Resistance here with gentleness is join'd,
Therefore I've loved thee, and have laid upon thee
The hand of sure possession; claiming still
A friend's endurance of my froward temper.
Which, froward as it is, from thee hath borne
What never human being but thyself
Had dared to goad it with.

De Grey. It is indeed
Thy well-earn'd right thou askest, noble Lorne,
And it is yielded to thee cheerfully.

Arg. My aged limbs are tired with pacing here:
Some one approaches: within that grove
We'll find a shady seat, and there conclude
This well debated point. [Exeunt.

SCENE III.—A COURT WITHIN THE CASTLE SURROUNDED WITH BUILDINGS.

Enter DUGALD and a VASSAL, two Servants at the same time cross with covered dishes in their hands.

Vas. I'll wait until the Earl shall be at leisure;
My business presses not. Where do they carry
Those cover'd meats? have ye within the castle
Some noble prisoner?

Dug. Would so it were! but these are days of peace,
They bear them to the stranger dame's apartment,
Whom they have told thee of. There, at her door,
An ancient faithful handmaid of the house,
Whate'er they bring receives; for none besides
Of all the household is admitted.

Vas. Now, by my fay! my purse and dirk I'd give
To know who this may be. Some chieftain's lady
Whom John of Lorne——

Dug. Nay, there, I must believe,
Thou guessest erringly. I grant, indeed,
He doffs his bonnet to each tacks-man's wife,
And is with every coif amongst them all,
Both young and old, in such high favour held,
Nor maiden, wife, nor beldame of the clan
But to the Earl doth her petition bring
Through intercession of the Lord of Lorne;
But never yet did husband, sire, or brother,
Of wrong from him complain.

Vas. I know it well.

Dug. But, be she whom she may,
This stranger here; I doubt not, friend, ere long,
We shall have bickering for her in the field
With some fierce foe or other.

Vas. So I trust:
And by my honest faith! this peace of ours
Right long and tiresome is. I thought, ere now,
Some of our restless neighbours would have trespass'd
And inroads made: but no; Argyll and Lorne
Have grown a terror to them: all is quiet;
And we ourselves must the aggressors be,
Or still this dull and slothful life endure,
Which makes our men of three-score years and ten
To fret and murmur.

Enter ROSA, with a servant conducting her.

Serv. (*to* Dugald.) A lady here, would see my Lord of Lorne.

Dug. Yes, still to him they come. (*looking at Rosa.*) Ha, see I rightly?
Rosa from Mull?

Rosa. Yes, Dugald; here thou see'st
A woeful bearer of unwelcome tidings.

Dug. What, hath thy Lady sent thee?

Rosa. Alas, alas! I have no Lady now.

Dug. Ha! is she dead? not many days ago
She was alive and well. Hast thou so soon
The castle quitted—left thy Lady's corse?

Rosa. Think'st thou I would have left her? on the night
When, as they say, she died, I from the castle
By force was ta'en, and to main-land convey'd;
Where in confinement I remain'd, till chance
Gave me the means of breaking from my prison;
And hither am I come, in woeful plight,
The dismal tale to tell.

Dug. A tale, indeed, most dismal, strange, and sudden.

Rosa. How she died
God knows; but much I fear foul play she had.
Where is the Lord of Lorne? for first to him
I wish to speak.

Dug. Come, I will lead thee to him. Had foul play!

Vas. Fell fiends they are could shed her blood! if this
Indeed hath been, 'twill make good cause, I wot;
The warlike pipe will sound our summons soon.

(EXEUNT Dugald *and* Rosa, *&c. as* Argyll *and* Sir Hubert *enter by the opposite side.*)

Arg. And wilt thou leave us then, my noble friend?
May we not still for some few days retain thee?

De Grey. Where'er I go, I carry in my heart
A warm remembrance of the friendly home
That still within these hospitable walls
I've found; but longer urge me not to stay.
In Helen's presence now, constrained and strange,
With painful caution, chacing from my lips
The ready thought, half quiver'd into utterance,
For cold corrected words, expressive only
Of culprit consciousness,—I sit; nor even
May look upon her face but as a thing
On which I may not look; so painful now
The mingled feeling is, since dark despair
With one faint ray of hope hath temper'd been.
I can no more endure it. She herself
Perceives it, and it pains her. Let me then
Bid you farewell, my Lord. When evening comes,
I'll under favour of the rising moon,
Set forth.

Arg. Indeed! so soon? and must it be?

De Grey. Yes; to Northumberland without delay
I fain would take my road. My aged father
Looks now impatiently for my return.

Arg. Then I'll no longer urge thee. To thy father,
The noble Baron, once, in better days,
My camp-mate and my friend, I must resign thee.
Bear to him every kind and cordial wish
An ancient friend can send, and——
(*a horn heard without.*) Hark, that horn!
Some messenger of moment is arrived.——
We'll speak of this again. The moon to-night
Is near the full, and at an early hour——

Enter a MESSENGER, bearing a letter.

Whose messenger art thou, who in thy hand
That letter bear'st with broad and sable seal,
Which seems to bring to me some dismal tidings?

Mess. From Mull, my Lord, I come; and the Maclean,
Our chief, commissioned me to give you this,
Which is indeed with dismal tidings fraught,
(Argyll *opens the letter, and reads it with affected surprise and sorrow.*)

Arg. Heavy indeed and sudden is the loss—
The sad calamity that hath befallen.—
The will of Heaven be done!
(*putting a handkerchief to his eyes, and leaning as if for support, upon* Sir Hubert—*then, after a pause, turning to the* Messenger.)
How did'st thou leave the chieftain? he, I hope,
Permits not too much sorrow to o'ercome
His manhood: doth he bear his grief composedly?

Mess. O no, it is most violent! at the funeral,
Had not the good Lochtarish, by his side,
Supported him, he had with very grief
Sunk to the earth. And good Lochtarish too,
Was in right great affliction.

Arg. Ay, good man;
I doubt it not. Ye've had a splendid funeral?

Mess. O yes, my Lord! that have we had. Good truth!
A grand and stately burial has it been.
Three busy days and nights through all the isle
Have bagpipes played, and sparkling beakers flowed;
And never corse, I trow, i' th' earth was laid
With louder lamentations.

Arg. Ay, I doubt not,
Their grief was loud enough. Pray pass ye in.
(*to attendants.*)
Conduct him there; and see that he be treated,
After his tedious journey, as befits
A way-tired stranger.

[EXEUNT, *all but* Argyll *and* Sir Hubert.

This doth all hope and all belief exceed.
Maclean will shortly follow this his notice,
(*giving* Sir Hubert *the letter.*)

To make me here a visit of condolence;
And thus within our power they put themselves
With most assured blindness.

De Grey. (*after reading it.*) 'Tis Lochtarish,
In all the arts of dark hypocrisy
So deeply skill'd, who doth o'ershoot his mark,
As such full often do.

Arg. And let him come!
At his own arts we trust to match him well.
Their force, I guess, is not in readiness,
Therefore, meantime, to stifle all suspicion,
This specious mummery he hath devised;
And his most wretched chief, led by his will,
Most wretchedly submits. Well, let us go
And tell to Lorne the news, lest too unguardedly
He should receive it. [Exeunt.

SCENE IV.—AN APARTMENT IN THE CASTLE.

Enter Sir HUBERT DE GREY, beckoning to ROSA, who appears on the opposite side.

De Grey. Rosa; I pray thee, spare me of thy leisure
Some precious moments: something would I say:
Wilt thou now favour me?

Rosa. Most willingly.

De Grey. As yet thy mistress knows not of the letter
Sent by Maclean, announcing his design
Of paying to the Earl this sudden visit—
This mockery of condolence?

Rosa. No; the Earl
Forbade me to inform her.

De Grey. This is well;
Her mind must be prepared. Meantime I go,
And thou art here to comfort and attend her:
O do it gently, Rosa! do it wisely!

Rosa. You need not doubt my will. Go ye so soon;
And to Northumberland?

De Grey. So I intended,
And so Argyll and John of Lorne believe:
But since this messenger from Mull arrived,
Another thought has struck me. Said'st thou not
The child—thy Lady's child, ta'en from the castle,
Is to the keeping of Lochtarish's mother
Committed, whose lone house is on the shore?

Rosa. Yes, whilst in prison pent, so did I hear
My keeper say, and much it troubled me.

De Grey. Canst thou to some good islander commend me,
Within whose house I might upon the watch
Conceal'd remain?—It is to Mull I go,
And not to England. While Maclean is here,
Attended by his Vassals, the occasion
I'll seize to save the infant.

Rosa. Bless thee for it!
Heaven bless thee for the thought!—I know a man—
An aged fisherman, who will receive you,
Uncle to Morton: and if he himself
Still in the island be, there will you find him,
Most willing to assist you.

De Grey. Hush, I pray, I hear thy Lady's steps.

Rosa. Near to the castle gate, e'er you depart,
I'll be in waiting to inform you farther
Of what may aid your purpose.

De Grey. Do, good Rosa,
And make me much thy debtor. But be secret.

Rosa. You need not doubt me.

Enter HELEN, and DE GREY goes up to her as if he would speak, but the words falter on his lips, and he is silent.

Hel. Alas! I see it is thy parting visit;
Thou com'st to say 'farewell!'

De Grey. Yes, Helen: I am come to leave with thee
A friend's dear benison——a parting wish——
A last———rest every blessing on thy head!
Be this permitted to me: (*kissing her hand.*) Fare thee well!
Heaven aid and comfort thee! farewell! farewell! (*is about to retire hastily, whilst* Helen *follows to prevent him.*)

Hel. O go not from me with that mournful look!
Alas! thy generous heart, deprest and sunk,
Looks on my state too sadly.——
I am not as thou think'st, a thing so lost,
In woe and wretchedness. Believe not so!
All whom misfortune with her rudest blasts
Hath buffeted, to gloomy wretchedness
Are not therefore abandoned. Many souls
From cloister'd cells, from hermits' caves, from holds
Of lonely banishment, and from the dark
And dreary prison house, do raise their thoughts
With humble cheerfulness to heaven, and feel
A hallowed quiet, almost akin to joy;
And may not I, by Heaven's kind mercy aided,
Weak as I am, with some good courage bear
What is appointed for me?——O be cheer'd!
And let not sad and mournful thoughts of me
Depress thee thus:—when thou art far away,
Thou'lt hear, the while, that in my father's house
I spend my peaceful days, and let it cheer thee.
I too shall every southern stranger question,
Whom chance may to these regions bring, and learn
Thy fame and prosperous state.

De Grey. My fame and prosperous state, while thou art thus!
If thou in calm retirement livest contented,
Lifting thy soul to heaven, what lack I more?
My sword and spear, changed to a pilgrim's staff,
Will be a prosperous state; and for my fame,—

A feeble sound that after death remains,
The echo of an unrepeated stroke
That fades away to silence,—surely this
Thou dost not covet for me.

Hel. Ah, I do!
Yet, granting here I err, didst thou not promise
To seek in wedded love and active duties
Thy share of cheerful weal?—and dost thou now
Shrink from thy generous promise? no, thou shalt not.
I hold thee bound—I claim it of thee boldly.
It is my right. If thou, in sad seclusion,
A lonely wanderer art, thou dost extinguish
The ray that should have cheer'd my gloom: thou makest
What else had been a calm and temper'd sorrow,
A state of wretchedness. O no! thou wilt not!
Take to thy generous heart some virtuous maid,
And doubt not thou a kindred heart wilt find.
The cheerful tenderness of woman's nature
To thine is suited, and when join'd to thee,
Will grow in virtue:—take thou then this ring,
If thou wilt honour so my humble gift,
And put it on her hand; and be assured
She who shall wear it,—she whose happy fate
Is link'd with thine, will prove a noble mate.

De Grey. O there I am assured! she whose fate
Is link'd with mine, if fix'd be such decree,
Most rich in ev'ry soft and noble trait
Of female virtue is: in this full well
Assured I am.———I would—I thought—forgive—
I speak but raving words:—a hasty spark,
Blown and extinguished, makes me waver thus.
Permit me then again. (*kissing her hand.*) High Heaven protect thee!
Farewell!

Hel. Farewell! and Heaven's good charge be thou!

(*They part, and both turn away opposite, when* Sir Hubert, *looking round just as he is about to go off, and seeing* Helen *also looking after him, sorrowfully, eagerly returns.*)

De Grey. Ah! are those looks———

(*Going to kneel at her feet, but immediately checking himself with much embarrassment.*)
Alas! why come I back?
Something there was———thou gavest me a ring;
I have not dropt it?

Rosa. (*coming forward.*) No, 'tis on your finger.

De Grey. Ay, true, good Rosa; but my wits are wilder'd;
I knew not what I sought. Farewell! farewell!

[Exit De Grey *hastily, while* Helen *and* Rosa *go off by the opposite side.*

ACT V.

Scene I.—Argyll's castle, the grand entrance—a noise of bustle and voices heard without, and servants seen crossing the stage, as the scene opens.

Enter Dugald, meeting 1st Servant.

Dug. They are arrived, Maclean and all his train;
Run quickly, man, and give our chieftains notice.

1st Serv. They know already: from the tower we spied
The mournful cavalcade: the Earl and Lorne
Are down the stair-case hasting to receive them.

Dug. I've seen them light, a sooty-coated train,
With lank and woeful faces, and their eyes
Bent to the ground, as though our castle gate
Had been the scutcheon'd portal of a tomb,
Set open to receive them.

2d Serv. Ay, on the pavement fall their heavy steps.
Measured and slow, as if her palled coffin
They follow'd still.

Dug. Hush, man! here comes the Earl,
With face composed and stern; but look behind him
How John of Lorne doth gnaw his nether lip,
And beat his clench'd hand against his thigh,
Like one who tampers with half-bridled ire!

2d Serv. Has any one offended him?

Dug. Be silent,
For they will overhear thee.——Yonder too
(*pointing to the opposite side of the stage.*)
Come the Macleans: let us our stations keep,
And see them meet. (*retiring.*)

Enter Argyll and Lorne, attended, and in deep mourning—while, at the same time, by the opposite side, enter Maclean, Benlora, Lochtarish and Glenfadden, with attendants, also in deep mourning—Argyll and Maclean go up to one another, and formally embrace.

Arg. Welcome! if such a cheerful word as this
May with our deep affliction suited be.
Lochtarish too, and brave Benlora; aye,
And good Glenfadden also;—be ye all
With due respect received, as claims your worth.

(*Taking them severally by the hand as he names them*—Maclean *then advances to embrace* Lorne, *who shrinks back from him, but immediately correcting himself, bends his body another way, as if suddenly seized with some violent pain.*)

Arg. (*to* Maclean.) Regard him not: he hath imprudently
A recent wound exposed to chilling air,

And oft the pain with sudden pang attacks him.

Loch. Ay, what is shrewder? we have felt the like,
And know it well, my Lord.

Arg. (*bowing to* Lochtarish, *but continuing to speak to* Maclean.) Yet ne'ertheless, good son-in-law and chieftain,
Believe thou well that with a brother's feelings,
Proportion'd to the dire and dismal case
That hath befallen, he now receives you; also
Receiving these your friends with equal favour.
This is indeed to us a woeful meeting,
Chieftain of Mull. (*looking keenly in his face, while the other shuns his eye.*)
I see full well the change
Which violent grief upon that harrow'd visage
So deeply hath impress'd.

Mac. (*still embarrassed, and shrinking from* Argyll's *observation.*) Ah, ah! the woeful day! I cannot speak.
Alas, alas!

Arg. Alas, in truth.
Too much the woeful widower's alter'd looks
Upon thy face I see.

Loch. (*to* Argyll.) You see, my Lord, his eyes with too much weeping
Are weak, and shun the light. Nor should we marvel
What must to him the sudden loss have been,
When even to us, who were more distantly
Connected with her rare and matchless virtue,
It brought such keen affliction?

Arg. Yes, good Lochtarish, I did give her to ye—
To your right worthy chief, a noble creature,
With every kindly virtue—every grace
That might become a noble chieftain's wife:
And that ye have so well esteem'd—so well
Regarded, cherish'd, and respected her,
As your excessive sorrow now declares,
Receive from me a grateful father's thanks.
Lochtarish, most of all to thy good love
I am beholden.

Loch. Ah! small was the merit
Such goodness to respect.

Arg. And thou, Benlora;
A woman, and a stranger, on the brave
Still potent claims maintain; and little doubt I
They were by thee regarded. (Benlora *steps back, frowning sternly, and remains silent.*) And, Glenfadden,
Be not thy merits overlook'd.

Glen. Alas!
You over-rate, my Lord, such slender service.

Arg. Wrong not, I pray, thy modest worth. But here.
(*turning again to* Maclean.)
Here most of all, from whom her gentle virtues,
And so indeed it right and fitting was,
Their best and dearest recompense received,
To thee, most generous chieftain, let me pay
The thanks that are thy due.

Mac. Oh, oh! alas!

Arg. Ay, in good sooth! I see thy grief-worn eyes
Do shun the light.
But grief is ever sparing of her words.
In brief, I thank you all: and for the love
Ye have so dearly shown to me and mine,
I trust, before we part, to recompense ye
As suits your merit and my gratitude.

Lorne. (*aside to* Argyll.) Ay, father; now ye speak to them shrewd words;
And now I'm in the mood to back you well.

Arg. (*aside to* Lorne.) 'Tis well thou art; but check those eager looks;
Lochtarish eyes thee keenly.
(*Directing a hasty glance to* Lochtarish, *who is whispering to* Glenfadden, *and looking suspiciously at* Lorne.)

Lorne. (*stepping forward to* Maclean, *&c.*) Chieftain, and honour'd gentlemen, I pray
The sullen, stern necessity excuse
Which pain imposed upon me, and receive,
Join'd with my noble father's, such poor thanks
As I may offer to your loving worth.

Arg. Pass on, I pray ye; till the feast be ready,
Rest ye above, where all things are prepared
For your refreshment. [EXEUNT.

SCENE II.—A NARROW ARCHED ROOM, ADJOINING TO A GALLERY.

Enter LOCHTARISH and GLENFADDEN.

Loch. How lik'st thou this, Glenfadden? doth the face
Argyll assumes, of studied courtesy,
Raise no suspicion?

Glen. Faith, I know not well!—
The speech, indeed, with which he welcomed us,
Too wordy, and too artificial seem'd
To be the native growth of what he felt.

Loch. It so to me appear'd: and John of Lorne,
First shrinking from Maclean, with sudden pain,
As he pretended, struck, then stern and silent,
Till presently assuming, like his father,
A courtesy, minute, and over studied,
He glozed us with his thanks:——
Didst thou not mark his keenly flashing eye,
When spoke Argyll of recompensing us
Before we part?

Glen. I did indeed observe it.

Loch. This hath a meaning.

Glen. Faith, I do suspect
Some rumour must have reach'd their ear; and yet
Our agents faithful are; it cannot be.

Loch. Or can, or can it not, beneath this roof
A night I will not sleep. When evening comes,

Meet we again. If at this banquet, aught
Shall happen to confirm our fears, forthwith
Let us our safety seek in speedy flight.

Glen. And leave Maclean behind us?

Loch. Ay, and Benlora too. Affairs the better
At Mull will thrive, when we have rid our hands
Of both these hind'rances, who in our way
Much longer may not be. (*listening.*) We're interrupted.
Let us into the gallery return,
And join the company with careless face,
Like those who have from curiosity
But stepp'd aside to view the house. Make haste!
It is Argyll and Lorne.

[Exeunt, *looking to the opposite side, alarmed, at which enter* Argyll *and* Lorne.

Lorne. Are you not now convinced? his conscious guilt
Is in his downcast and embarrass'd looks,
And careful shunning of all private converse
Whene'er aside you've drawn him from his train,
Too plainly seen: you cannot now, my Lord,
Doubt of his share in this atrocious deed.

Arg. Yet, Lorne, I would, ere further we proceed,
Prove it more fully still. The dinner hour
Is now at hand. (*listening.*) What steps are those,
That in the gallery, close to this door,
Like some lone straggler from the company
Withdrawn, sound quickly pacing to and fro?
Look out and see. (Lorne *going to the door, and calling back to* Argyll *in a low voice.*) It is Maclean himself.

Arg. Beckon him hither then. Thank Heaven for this!
Now opportunity is fairly given,
If that constrainedly he cloaks their guilt,
To free him from their toils.

Enter Maclean conducted by Lorne.

Arg. (*to* Maclean.) My son, still in restraint before our Vassals
Have we conversed; but now in privacy.——
Start not, I pray thee:—sit thee down, Maclean:
I would have close and private words of thee:
Sit down, I pray; my aged limbs are tired.
(Argyll *and* Maclean *sit down, whilst* Lorne *stands behind them, with his ear bent eagerly to listen, and his eyes fixed with a side glance on* Maclean.)
Chieftain, I need not say to thee, who deeply
Lament'st with us our sad untimely loss,
How keenly I have felt it.———
And now indulge a father in his sorrow,
And say how died my child. Was her disease
Painful as it was sudden?

Mac. It was, alas! I know not how it was.
A fell disease!—her end was so appointed.

Lorne. (*behind.*) Ay, that I doubt not.

Mac. A fearful malady! though it received
All good assistance.

Lorne. (*behind.*) That I doubt not either.

Mac. A cruel ill! but how it dealt with her,
My grief o'erwhelm'd me so, I could not tell.

Arg. Say—wert thou present? did'st thou see her die?

Mac. Oh, oh! the woeful sight, that I should see it!

Arg. Thou didst not see it then?

Mac. Alack, alack!
O would that I had seen——O, woe is me!
Her pain—her agony was short to mine!

Lorne. (*behind impatiently.*) Is this an answer, chieftain, to the question
Argyll hath plainly ask'd thee?—wert thou present
When Helen died? didst thou behold her death?

Mac. O yes; indeed I caught your meaning lamely;
I meant—I thought—I know not certainly
The very time and moment of her death,
Although within my arms she breathed her last.

Lorne. (*rushing forward eagerly.*) Now are we answered.
(Argyll, *covering his face with his hands, throws himself back in his chair for some time without speaking.*)

Mac. (*to* Argyll.) I fear, my Lord, too much I have distress'd you.

Arg. Somewhat you have indeed. And further now
I will not press your keen and recent sorrow
With questions that so much renew its anguish.

Mac. You did, belike, doubt of my tenderness.

Arg. O no! I have no doubts. Within your arms
She breath'd her last?

Mac. Within my arms she died.

Arg. (*looking hard at* Maclean, *and then turning away.*) His father was a brave and honest chief!

Mac. What says my Lord?

Arg. A foolish exclamation,
Of no determined meaning. (*bell sounds without.*) Dry your tears:
The hall-bell warns us to the ready feast;
And through the gallery I hear the sound
Of many footsteps hastening to the call.
Chieftain, I follow thee.

[Exeunt Argyll *and* Maclean.

Lorne. (*alone, stopping to listen.*) The castle, throng'd throughout with moving life
From every winding stair, and arched aisle
A mingled echo sends.
Ay; light of foot, I hear their sounding steps
A-trooping to the feast, who never more
At feast shall sit or social meal partake.
O wretch! O fiend of vile hypocrisy!
How fiercely burns my blood within my veins
Till I am match'd with thee! [Exit.

SCENE III.—THE GREAT HALL OF THE CASTLE, WITH A FEAST SET OUT, AND THE COMPANY ALREADY PLACED AT TABLE, WITH SERVANTS AND ATTENDANTS IN WAITING, WHO FILL EVERY PART—ARGYLL IS SEATED AT THE HEAD OF THE TABLE, WITH MACLEAN ON HIS LEFT HAND, AND A CHAIR LEFT EMPTY ON HIS RIGHT.

Arg. (*to* Maclean *&c.*) Most worthy chief, and honoured guests and kinsmen,
I crave your pardon for this short delay:
One of our company is wanting still,
For whom we have reserved this empty place;
Nor will the chief of Mull unkindly take it,
That on our better hand this chair of honour
Is for a Lady kept.

All. A Lady! (*a general murmur of surprise is heard through the hall.*)

Arg. Yes;
Who henceforth of this house the mistress is;
And were it palace of our Scottish king,
Would so deserve to be.

All. We give you joy, my Lord. (*a confused murmur heard again.*)

Mac. We give you joy, my Lord; your age is blest.
We little thought in these our funeral weeds,
A bridal feast to darken.

Lorne. No, belike.
Many who'd on their coat at break of day,
Know not what shall befall them, therein girt,
Ere evening close. (*assuming a gay tone.*)
The Earl hath set a step-dame o'er my head
To cow my pride. What think ye brave Maclean?
This world so fleeting is, and full of change,
Some lose their wives I trow, and others find them.
Bridegrooms and widowers do, side by side,
Their beakers quaff; and which of them at heart
Most glad or sorry is, the subtle fiend,
Who in men's hollow hearts his council holds,
He wotteth best, though each good man will swear,
His *lost* or *found* all other dames excell'd.

Arg. Curb, Lorne, thy saucy tongue: Maclean himself
Shall judge if she—the Lady I have found,
Equal in beauty she whom he hath lost.
In worth I'm sure she does.—But hush! she comes.

(*A great commotion through the hall amongst the* Attendants, *&c.*)

All. It is the Lady.

Arg. (*rising from his seat, and making signs to the* Attendants *nearest the door.*) Ho, there! make room, and let the Lady pass.

(*The* Servants *&c. stand apart, ranging themselves on every side to let her pass; and enter* Helen *magnificently dressed with a deep white veil over her face; while* Lorne, *going forward to meet her, conducts her to her chair on* Argyll's *right hand.*)

Arg. (*to the* Campbells.) Now, fill a cup of welcome to our friends.

Loch. (*to* Maclean.) Chieftain, forgettest thou to greet the Lady?

Mac. (*turning to* Argyll.) Nay, rather give, my Lord, might I presume,
Our firstling cup to this fair Lady's health,
The noble dame of this right princely house.
And, though close veil'd she be, her beauty's lustre
I little question.

(*Fills up a goblet, while* Lochtarish, Benlora, *&c. follow his example, and, standing up, bows to the* Lady.)

Your health, most noble dame.

(Helen, *rising also, bows to him, and throws back her veil, the cup falls from his hands; all the company start up from table; screams and exclamations of surprise are heard from all corners of the hall, and confused commotion seen every where.* Maclean, Lochtarish, *and* Glenfadden, *stand appalled and motionless; but* Benlora *looking fiercely round him, draws his sword.*)

Ben. What! are we here like deer bay'd in a nook?
And think ye so to slay us, crafty foe?
No, by my faith! like such we will not fall,
Arms in our hands, though by a thousand foes
Encompass'd.—Cruel, murderous, ruthless men,
Too good a warrant have ye now to think us,
But cowards never!——Rouse ye, base Macleans!
And thou, whose subtlety around us thus
With wreckful skill these cursed toils have wound,
Sinks thy base spirit now? (*to* Lochtarish.)

Arg. (*holding up his hand.*) Be silence in the hall!
Macleans, ye are my guests: but if the feast
Delight ye not, free leave ye have to quit it.
Lorne, see them all, with right due courtesy,
Safely protected to the castle gate.
(*turning to* Maclean.)
Here, other name than chieftain or Maclean
He may not give thee: but without our walls,
If he should call thee murderer, traitor, coward,
Weapon to weapon, let your fierce contention
Be fairly held, and he, who first shall yield,
The liar be.——Campbells! I charge ye there,
Free passage for the chieftain and his train.

(Maclean *and* Lochtarish, *&c. without speaking, quit the hall through the crowd of* Attendants, *who divide and form a lane to let them pass.* Helen, *who had sunk down almost senseless upon her seat, seeing the hall cleared of the crowd who go out after the* Macleans, *now starts up, and catches hold of* Argyll, *with an imploring look of strong distress.*)

Hel. O father! well I know foul are his crimes,

But what—O what, am I, that for my sake
This bloody strife should be ?—O, think, my Lord !
He gave consent and sanction to my death,
But thereon could not look: and at your gate—
Even on your threshold, must his life be ta'en ?
For well I know the wroth of Lorne is deadly.
And gallant Lorne himself, if scaith should be,—
O pity, pity ?—O for pity stay them !

Arg. Let go thy hold, weak woman: pity now !
Rosa, support her hence.
(*Committing her to* Rosa, *who now comes forward, and tearing himself away.*)

Hel. (*endeavouring to run after him, and catch hold of him again.*)
O be not stern ? beneath the ocean rather
Would I had sunk to rest than been the cause
Of horrid strife like this. O pity ! pity !
[Exeunt, *she running out after him, distractedly.*

Scene IV.—before the gate of the castle.

A confused noise of an approaching crowd heard within, and presently enter, from the gate, Maclean, Benlora, Lochtarish, and Glenfadden, with their attendants, conducted by Lorne, and followed by a crowd of Campbells, who range themselves on both sides.

Lorne. (*to* Maclean.) Now, chieftain, we the gate have pass'd,—the bound
That did restrain us. Host and guest no more,
But deadly foes we stand, who from this spot
Shall never both with life depart. Now,
And boldly say to him, if so thou darest,
Who calls thee villain, murd'rer, traitor, coward,
That he belies thee. Turn then, Chief of Mull !
Here, man to man my single arm to thine,
I give thee battle ; or, refusing this,
Our captive here retain thee, to be tried
Before the summon'd vassals of our clans,
As suits thy rank and thine atrocious deeds.
Take thou thy choice.

Mac. Yes, John of Lorne, I turn.
This turf on which we tread my death-bed is ;
This hour my latest term ; this sky of light
The last that I shall look on. Draw thy sword :
The guilt of many crimes o'erwhelms my spirit ;
But never will I shame my brave Macleans,
By dying, as their chief, a coward's death.

Ben. What ! shalt thou fight alone, and we stand by
Idly to look upon it ? (*going up fiercely to* Lorne.) Turn me out
The boldest, brawniest Campbell of your bands ;
Aye, more than one, as many as you will ;
And I the while, albeit these locks be grey,
Leaning my aged back against this tree,
Will show your youngsters how, in other days,
Macleans did fight, when baited round with foes.

Lorne. Be still, Benlora ; other sword than these,
Thy chief's and mine, shall not this day be drawn.
If I prevail against him, here with us
Our captives you remain. If I am conquer'd,
Upon the faith and honour of a chieftain,
Ye shall again to Mull in safety go.

Ben. Spoke like a noble chieftain !

Lorne. Ye shall, I say, to Mull in safety go.
But there prepare ye to defend your coast
Against a host of many thousand Campbells ;
In which, be well assured, swords as good
As John of Lorne's, to better fortune join'd,
Shall of your crimes a noble vengeance take.

(Lorne *and* Maclean *fight ; and after a combat of some length,* Maclean *is mortally wounded, and the* Campbell's *give a loud shout.*)

Mac. It is enough, brave Lorne ; this wound is death :
And better deed thou could'st not do upon me,
Than rid me of a life disgraced and wretched.
But guilty though I be, thou see'st full well,
That to the brave opposed, arms in hand,
I am no coward.—Oh ! could I as bravely,
In home-rais'd broils, with violent men have strove,
It had been well : but there, alas ! I proved
A poor, irresolute, and nerveless wretch.
(*after a pause and struggling for breath.*)
To live, alas ! in good men's memories
Detested and contemn'd :—to be with her
For whom I thought to be——Come, gloomy grave !
Thou cover'st all !
(*after another painful struggle, every one standing in deep silence round him, and* Lorne *bending over him compassionately.*)
Pardon of man I ask not,
And merit not—brave Lorne I ask it not ;
Though in thy piteous eye a look I see
That might embolden me.——There is above
One who doth know the weakness of our nature,—
Our thoughts and conflicts :—All that e'er have breathed ;
The bann'd and bless'd must pass to him :—my soul
Into his hands, in humble penitence,
I do commit. (*dies.*)

Lorne. And may Heaven pardon thee, un happy man !

Enter ARGYLL, and HELEN following him, attended by ROSA.

Lorne. (*to attendants.*) Alas, prevent her!
(*endeavouring to keep her back.*)
Helen, come not hither: This is no sight for thee.

Helen. (*pressing forward and seeing the body.*)
Oh! oh! and hast thou dealt with him so quickly,
Thou fell and ruthless Lorne?—no time allow'd!— (*kneeling by the body.*)
O that within that form sense still were lodged!
To hear my voice,—to know that in my heart
No thought of thee——Let others scan thy deeds,
Pitied and pardon'd art thou here. (*her hand on her breast.*) Alas!
So quickly fell on thee th' avenging stroke!
No sound of peace came to thy dying ear,
No look of pity to thy closing eyes!
Pitied and pardon'd art thou in this breast,
But canst not know it now.—Alas! alas!

Arg. (*to attendants.*) Prepare ye speedily to move the body.
Mean time, our prisoners within the castle
Secure ye well.
(*To other attendants who lay hold of* Lochtarish *and* Glenfadden, *while* Benlora, *drawing his sword, attacks furiously those who attempt to seize and disarm him, and they, closing round and endeavouring to overpower him, he is mortally wounded in the scuffle.*)

Ben. Ay, bear me now within your prison walls:
Alive, indeed, thought ye to bind me? No.
Two years within your dungeons have I lived,
But lived for vengeance: closed that hope, the earth
Close o'er me too!—alive to bind Benlora!
(*falls.*)

Lorne. (*running up to him.*) Ha! have ye slain him?—fierce and warlike spirit!
I'm glad that thou hast had a soldier's death,
Arms in thy hands, all savage as thou art.
(*turning to* Lochtarish *and* Glenfadden.)
But thou, the artful, base, contriving villain,
Who hast of an atrocious, devilish act
The mover been, and this thy vile associate,
Prepare ye for the villain's shameful end,
Ye have so dearly earn'd.
(*Waving his hand for the attendants to lead them off.*)

Loch. Be not so hasty, Lorne.—Think'st thou indeed
Ye have us here within your grasp, and nought
Of hostage or security retain'd for our protection?

Lorne. What dost thou mean?

Loch. Deal with us as ye will:
But if within a week, return'd to Mull,
In safety I appear not, with his blood,
The helpless heir, thy sister's infant son,
Who in my mother's house our pledge is kept,
Must pay the forfeit.

Hel. (*starting up from the body in an agony of alarm.*)
O horrible! ye will not murder him?
Murder a harmless infant!

Loch. My aged mother, lady, loves her son
As thou dost thine; and she has sworn to do it.

Hel. Has sworn to do it! Oh! her ruthless nature
Too well I know. (*to Lorne eagerly.*) Loose them, and let them go.

Lorne. Let fiends like these escape?—

Arg. (*to Helen.*) He does but threaten
To move our fears: they dare not slay the child.

Hel. They dare! they will!—O if thou art my father!
If nature's band e'er twined me to thy heart
As this poor child to mine, have pity on me!
Loose them and let them go!—nay, do it quickly.
O what is vengeance! spare my infant's life.
Unpitying Lorne! art thou a brother too?
The hapless father's blood is on thy sword,
And wilt thou slay the child! O spare him! spare him!
(*Kneeling to* Argyll *and* Lorne, *who stand irresolute, when enter* Sir Hubert De Grey, *carrying something in his arms, wrapped up in a mantle, and followed by* Morton—*On seeing* Sir Hubert, *she springs from the ground, and rushes forward to him.*)
Ha! art thou here? in blessed hour return'd
To join thy prayers with mine,—to move their hearts—
Their flinty hearts;—to bid them spare my child!

De Grey. (*lifting up the mantle and showing a sleeping child.*)
The prayer is heard already: look thou here
Beneath this mantle where he soundly sleeps.
(Helen *utters a cry of joy, and holds out her arms for the* child, *but at the same time sinks to the ground, embracing the knees of* Sir Hubert—Argyll *and* Lorne *run up to him, and all their* Vassals, *&c. crowding round, close them about on every side, while a general murmur of exultation is heard through the whole*—Lochtarish *and* Glenfadden, *with those who guard them, are struck with astonishment and consternation.*)

Arg. (*to those who guard* Lochtarish, *&c. stepping forward from the crowd.*)
Lead to the grated keep your prisoners,
There to abide their doom. Upon the guilty
Our vengeance falls, and only on the guilty,
To all their clan besides, in which I know
Full many a gallant heart included is,
I still extend a hand of amity.
If they reject it, fair and open war

Between us be: and trust we still to find
them
The noble, brave Macleans, the valiant foes,
That, ere the dark ambition of a villain,
For wicked ends, their gallant minds had
warp'd,
We heretofore have found them. O that men
In blood so near, in country, and in valour,
Should spend in petty broils their manly
strength,
That might, united for the public weal,
On foreign foes such noble service do!
O that the day were come when gazing
southron,
Whilst these our mountain warriors, mar-
shalled forth
To meet in foreign climes their country's
foes,
Along their crowded cities slowly march,
To sound of warlike pipe, their plaided bands,
Shall say, with eager fingers pointing thus,
"Behold those men!—their sunn'd but
thoughtful brows:
Their sinewy limbs; their broad and portly
chests,
Lapp'd in their native vestments, rude but
graceful!—
Those be our hardy brothers of the north;—
The bold and generous race, who have, be-
neath
The frozen circle and the burning line,
The rights and freedom of our native land
Undauntedly maintain'd." Come that day
will,
When in the grave this hoary head of mine,
And many after heads, in death are laid;
And happier men, our sons, shall live to see
it.
O may they prize it too with grateful hearts!
And, looking back on these our stormy days
Of other years, pity, admire, and pardon
The fierce, contentious, ill-directed valour
Of gallant fathers, born in darker times.

EPILOGUE.

WRITTEN BY HENRY MACKENZIE, ESQ.

Well! here I am, those scenes of suff'ring
o'er,
Safe among you, "a widowed thing" no
more;
And though some squeamish critics still con-
tend,
That not so soon the tragic tone should end,
Nor flippant epilogue, with smiling face,
Elbow her serious sister from the place;
I stand prepared with precedent and custom,
To plead the adverse doctrine—wont you
trust 'em?
I think you will, and now the curtain's down,
Unbend your brows, nor on my prattle
frown.
You've seen how, in our country's ruder
age,
Our moody Lords would let their Vassals rage,
And while they drove men's herds, and burnt
their houses,
To some lone isle condemn'd their own poor
spouses;
Their portion—drowning when the tide
should serve;
Their separate aliment—a leave to starve;
And for the Scottish rights of *Dower* and
Tierce,
A deep sea burial, and an empty hearse.
Such was of old the fuss about this matter;
In our good times 'tis managed greatly bet-
ter;
When modern ladies part with modern lords,
Their business no such tragic tale affords;
Their "Family Legends," in the *Charter-chest*,
In deeds of ink, not deeds of blood, consist;
In place of ruffians ambushed in the dark,
Comes, with his pen, a harmless lawyer's
clerk,
Draws a long—bond, my lady packs her
things,
And leaves her mate to smoothe his ruffled
wings.
In the free code of first enlighten'd France,
Marriage was broke for want of *convenance;*
No fault to find, no grievances to tell,
But, like tight shoes, they did not *fit* quite
well.
The lady curt'sied, with "*Adieu, Monsieur*,"
The husband bow'd, or shrugg'd "*de tout
mon coeur!*"
"*L'affaire est faite;*" each partner free to range,
Made life a dance, and every dance a change.
In England's colder soil they scarce con-
trive
To keep these foreign freedom-plants alive;
Yet in some gay parterres we've seen, ev'n
there,
Its blushing fruit this frail exotic bear;—
Couples make shift to slip the marriage chain,
Cross hands—cast off—and are themselves
again. (*bell rings.*)
But, soft! I hear the Prompter's summons
rung,
That calls me off, and stops my idle tongue;
A sage, our fair and virtuous Author's friend,
Shakes his stern head, and bids my nonsense
end;—
Bids me declare, she hopes her parent land
May long this current of the times withstand;
That here, in purity and honour bred,
Shall love and duty wreath the nuptial bed;
The brave good husband, and his faithful
wife,
Revere the sacred charities of life;
And bid their children, like the sires of old,
Firm, honest, upright, for their country bold,
Here, where "Rome's eagles found unvan-
quished foes,"
The Gallic vulture fearlessly oppose,
Chase from this favoured isle, with baffled
wing,
Bless'd in its good old laws, old manners, and
old King.

METRICAL LEGENDS

OF

EXALTED CHARACTERS.

PREFACE.

In calling the following pieces Metrical Legends, I do not use the term as denoting fictitious stories, but as chronicles or memorials. The acts of great men, as related in history, are so blended with the events of the times in which they lived, and with the acts of their contemporaries, that it is difficult for a great proportion of readers to form, at the conclusion of the history, a distinct idea of all they have really performed: and even of those who might do so without difficulty, how few bestow their leisure in fairly considering those claims of the great and the good to their respect and admiration! Biography, where sources of information regarding the private character and habits of the individual remain, has made amends for this unavoidable defect in history, and is a most instructive and interesting study. Yet the minute detail of the character too often does the same injury to the departed Great, which a familiar acquaintance still oftener does to the living; for a lengthened, unrelieved account is very unfavourable to that rousing and generous admiration which the more simple and distant view of heroic worth is fitted to inspire;—an impulse most healthful and invigorating to the soul.

Romance, in verse and in prose, has, and been successfully, attempted to supply those deficiencies, by adding abundance of fictitious circumstances to the traces of history and biography—a task pleasing to the writer and the reader. But in her zeal to display the abstract perfections of a hero, she has not rested satisfied with additions; she has boldly and unwarrantably made use of absolute contradictions to those traces, even when generally known and well authenticated. This is the greatest injury to the Mighty Dead. It is throwing over the venerated form of a majestic man, a gauzy veil, on which is delineated the fanciful figure of an angel. If time has removed that form to such a distance, that a faint outline only can be perceived, let us still behold the outline unshaded and unchanged. "Disturb not the ashes of the dead," is a sentiment acknowledged and obeyed by every feeling mind; but to disturb those memorials of worth—those shadowings of the soul—what may be called their intellectual remains, is by far the greatest sacrilege.

My reader must not, however, suppose that I would debar romance from the use of every real name, and oblige her to people her stories entirely with beings fictitious both in name and character. This would be too rigid. Where history is so obscure or remote, that we know little of a hero but his name, the romance writer may seize it as lawful spoil; for he cannot thereby confuse our ideas of truth and falsehood, or change and deform what has no form. It is only when a character known, though imperfectly, is wrested from the events with which it was really connected, and overlaid at the same time with fanciful attributes, that this can be justly complained of.

Having this view of the subject in my mind, and a great desire, notwithstanding, to pay some tribute to the memory of a few characters for whom I felt a peculiar admiration and respect, I have ventured upon what may be considered, in some degree, as a new attempt,—to give a short descriptive chronicle of those noble beings, whose existence has honoured human nature and benefited mankind.

In relating a true story, though we do not add any events or material circumstances to it, and abstain from attributing any motives for action, which have not been credibly reported, or may not be fairly inferred, yet, how often do we spontaneously, almost unwittingly, add description similar to what we know must have belonged to the actors and scenery of our story! Our story, for instance, says, "that a man, travelling at night through a wild forest, was attacked by a band of robbers." Our story-teller adds, "that the night was dark as pitch, scarcely a star to be seen twinkling between the drifted clouds; that the blast shook the trees, and howled dismally around him." Our story says, "that hearing the sound of approaching steps, he went behind a tree to wait till the robbers should pass, but unfortunately stumbling, the noise of his fall betrayed him, and he was seized upon, wounded, and stripped of every thing he possessed." Our story-teller adds, (particularly if the subject of the story is known to be of a timid spirit,) "that their footsteps sounded along the hollow ground like the trampling of a host; that he stopped and listened with fearful anxiety; that, on their nearer approach, voices were mingled with the sound, like the hoarse deep accents of a murderer; that he trembled with fear; that, in quitting the path, every black stump or bush seemed to him a man in armour; that his limbs shook so violently, he could not raise his feet sufficiently to disentangle them from the fern and long grass which impeded him," &c. Or our story may say, "that the daughter of a proud chief stole from his castle on a summer morning, and joined her expecting lover in a neighbouring wood." The story-teller says, 'she opened the door of her chamber with a beating heart, listened anx-

iously lest any one should be a-stir in the family; that the sun shone softly through the ruddy air, on the fresh green boughs and dewy-webbed plants as she passed, and that she sighed to think she might never return to the haunts of her childhood any more." The story says, "she fled with him on horseback;" and the story-teller cannot well say less than, "that he set her on a beautiful steed, which stood ready caparisoned under the trees; that the voice of her lover gave her courage; that they passed over the silent country, in which not even a peasant was to be seen at his early labour, with the swiftness of an arrow, and every stream they crossed gave them confidence of escaping pursuit," &c. And thus our story-teller goes on, being present in imagination to every thing he relates, and describing the feelings, sounds, and appearances which he conceives must naturally have accompanied the different events of his story, almost, as I said before, without being aware that he is taking so much of what he relates entirely for granted.

In imitation then of this human propensity, from which we derive so much pleasure, though mischievous, when not indulged with charity and moderation, I have written the following Metrical Legends, describing such scenes as truly belong to my story, with occasionally the feelings, figures, and gestures of those whose actions they relate, and also assigning their motives of action, as they may naturally be supposed to have existed.

The events they record are taken from sources sufficiently authentic; and where any thing has been reasonably questioned, I give some notice of the doubt. I have endeavoured to give them with the brief simplicity of a chronicle, though frequently stopping in my course, where occasion for reflection or remark naturally offered itself, or proceeding more slowly, when objects, capable of interesting or pleasing description tempted me to linger. Though my great desire has been to display such portraitures of real worth and noble heroism, as might awaken high and generous feelings in a youthful mind; yet I have not, as far as I know, imputed to my heroes motives or sentiments beyond what their noble deeds do fairly warrant. I have made each Legend short enough to be read in one moderate sitting, that the impression might be undivided, and that the weariness of a story, not varied or enriched by minuter circumstances, might be, if possible, avoided. —It has, in short, been my aim to produce sentimental and descriptive memorials of exalted worth.

The manner of the rhyme and versification I have, in some degree, borrowed from my great contemporary Sir Walter Scott; following in this respect, the example of many of the most popular poets of the present day. Let it not, however, be supposed, that I presume to believe myself a successful borrower. We often stretch out our hand for one thing, and catch another; and if, instead of the easy, light, rich, and fanciful variety of his rhyme and measure, the reader should perceive that I have, unfortunately, found others of a far different character, I ought not to be greatly surprised or offended. But, indeed, I have been almost forced to be thus presumptuous; for blank verse, or heroic rhyme, being grave and uniform in themselves, require a story varied with many circumstances, and would only have added to the dryness of a chronicle, even though executed with a skill which I pretend not to possess. Yet, when I say that I have borrowed, let it not be supposed I have attempted to imitate his particular expressions; I have only attempted to write in a certain free irregular measure, which, but for him, I should probably never have known or admired.

These days are rich in Poets, whose fertile imaginations have been chiefly employed in national or Eastern romance; the one abounding in variety of character, event, and description of familiar or grand objects, and enlivened with natural feelings and passions; the other, decorated with more artificial and luxurious description, and animated with exaggerated and morbid emotions, each in its own way continually exciting the interest and curiosity of the reader, and leading him on through a paradise of fairy-land. In these days, therefore, Legends of real events, and characters already known to the world, even though animated with a warmth of sentiment, and vividness of description far exceeding my ability to give, have not the same chance for popularity which they might formerly have had. I own this, and am willing unrepiningly to submit to disadvantages which arise from such a delightful cause. For who would wish, were it possible, to remove such an impediment for his own convenience! It is better to take a humble place with such contemporaries, than to stand distinguished in a desert place. I only mention this circumstance to bespeak some consideration and indulgence from readers accustomed to such intoxicating entertainment.

The hero of my first Legend is one, at the sound of whose name some sensation of pride and of gratitude passes over every Scottish heart. He belongs indeed to the "land of the mountain and the flood," which, till of later years, was considered by her more fertile neighbour as a land of poverty and barrenness; but the generous devotedness of a true patriot connects him with the noblest feelings of all mankind; or if the contemplation of that excellence be more circumscribed, the feeling in his countrymen which arises from it, is for that very reason the deeper and the dearer. The circumstances of the times which followed him,—the continuance of Edward's power in Scotland, destroyed, many years after, by the wisdom and perseverance of a most gallant and popular king, has made the name of Wallace occur but seldom in the regular histories

of Scotland, while his great actions are mentioned so carelessly and briefly, that we read them with disappointment and regret. But when we remember, that, from being the younger son of a private gentleman of small consideration, he became the military leader and governor of the whole nation, whose hereditary chieftains, accustomed to lead their clans to battle, were both proud and numerous, we may well suppose that all related of him by his friend and contemporary, Blair, which makes the substance of the blind Minstrel's poem, is true; or, at least, if not entirely correct, does not exceed the truth.

The mixture of fiction which is found in it, forms no reasonable objection to receiving those details that are probable and coincide with general history and the character and circumstances of the times. To raise his country from the oppression which her nobles so long and so basely endured; to make head against such a powerful, warlike and artful enemy; to be raised by so many hereditary chiefs to be warden or protector of the realm, on whose behalf he, as a rival power, entered into compacts and treaties with the Monarch, who had England and some fair provinces of France under his dominion, presupposes a fortune and ability in war, joined with talents for governing, equal to all that his private historian or even tradition has ascribed to him. We may smile at the wonderful feats of strength related of him by Blind Harry, and traditionally received over the whole country; but when we consider that his *personal acts*, when still very young, are the only reason that can be given for attracting so many followers to his command, we must believe that his lofty soul and powerful intellect were united to a body of extraordinary strength and activity. Wallace Wight, or the Strong, is the appellation by which he is distinguished in his own country; and the romantic adventures of a Robin Hood are by tradition fondly joined to the mighty acts of Scotland's triumphant deliverer.

His character and story are in every point of view particularly fitted either for poetry or romance; yet, till very lately, he has not been the subject, as far as I know, of any modern pen. Wallace, or the Field of Falkirk, written in nervous and harmonious verse, by a genius particularly successful in describing the warlike manners and deeds of ancient times, and in mixing the rougher qualities of the veteran leader with the supposed tenderness of a lover, is a poem that does honour to its author and to the subject she has chosen. Wallace, or the Scottish Chief, which through a rich variety of interesting, imaginary adventures, conducts a character of most perfect virtue and heroism to an affecting and tragical end—is a romance deservedly popular. This tribute to the name of Wallace from two distinguished English women, I mention with pleasure, notwithstanding all I have said against mixing true with fictitious history.*

Wallace, it must be owned, though several times the deliverer of his country from the immediate oppression of her formidable enemy, was cut off in the midst of his noble exertions and left her in the power of Edward; therefore he was not, in a full sense, the deliverer of Scotland, which was ultimately rescued from the yoke by Robert Bruce. But had there been no Wallace to precede him, in all human likelihood, there would have been no Bruce. Had it not been for the successful struggles of the first hero, the country, with her submissive nobles, would have been so completely subdued and permanently settled under the iron yoke of Edward, that the second would never have conceived the possibility of recovering its independence. The example set by Wallace, and the noble spirit he had breathed into his countrymen, were a preparation—one may almost say, the moral implements by which the valiant and persevering Bruce accomplished his glorious task.

The reader, perhaps, will smile at the earnestness with which I estimate the advantage of having been rescued from the domination of Edward, now, when England and Scotland are happily united; making one powerful and generous nation, which hath nobly maintained, for so many generations, a degree of rational liberty, under the form of a limited monarchy, hitherto enjoyed by no other people. But when we recollect the treatment which Ireland received as a conquered country and of which she in some degree still feels the baneful effects, we shall acknowledge, with gratitude, the blessing of having been united to England under far different circumstances. Nay, it may not, perhaps, be estimating the noble acts of William Wallace at an extravagant rate to believe, that England as well as Scotland, under Divine Providence, may owe its liberty to him: for, had the English crown, at so early a period, acquired such an accession of power, it would probably, like the other great crowns of Europe, have established for itself a despotism which could not have been shaken.

In comparing the two great heroes of that period, it should always be remembered, that Bruce fought for Scotland and her crown conjoined; Wallace, for Scotland alone; no Chronicler or Historian, either English or Scotch, having ever imputed to him any but the purest and most disinterested motives for his unwearied and glorious exertions.

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* Since the above observations were written, Mrs. Heman's prize-poem, on the given subject of the meeting between Wallace and Bruce on the banks of Carron, has appeared, with its fair-won honours on its brow; and there is a Play on the life of our hero, from the pen of a very young and promising dramatist, which is at present represented with success on the stage of Covent Garden.

The hero of my second Legend is Columbus; who, to the unfettered reach of thought belonging to a Philosopher, the sagacious intrepidity of a chieftain or leader, and the adventurous boldness of a discoverer, added the gentleness and humanity of a Christian. For the first and last of these qualities he stands distinguished from all those enterprising chiefs who followed his steps. The greatest event in the history of Columbus takes place at the beginning, occasioning so strong an excitement that what follows after, as immediately connected with him, (his persecution and sufferings excepted,) are comparatively flat and uninteresting; and then it is our curiosity regarding the inhabitants and productions of the new world that chiefly occupy our attention. Landing on some new coast; receiving visits from the Indians and their Caziques; bartering beads and trinkets for gold or provisions, under circumstances similar to those attending his intercourse with so many other places; nautical observations, and continued mutinies and vexations arising from the avarice and ambition of his officers, are the changes continually recurring. His history, therefore, circumstantially, rather obscures than displays his greatness; the outline being so grand and simple, the detail so unvaried and minute. The bloody, nefarious, and successful adventures of Cortes and Pizarro, keep their heroes (great men of a more vulgar cast,) constantly in possession of the reader's attention, and have rendered them favourable subjects of history, tragedy, and romance. But the great consequences and change in human affairs which flowed from the astonishing enterprise of Columbus, have made his existence as one of the loftiest landmarks in the route of time. And he is a hero who may be said to have belonged to no particular country; for every nation has felt the effects of his powerful mind; and every nation, in the days at least in which he lived, was unworthy of him. This, notwithstanding these poetical defects in his story, has prevented him from being neglected by poets. The first epic poem produced in the continent which he discovered, has, with great propriety, Columbus for its hero; and fragments of a poem on the same noble subject, published some years ago in this country, have given us cause to regret, that the too great fastidiousness of the author should have induced him to publish fragments only: a fastidiousness which, on this occasion, had been better employed, as such a disposition most commonly is, against others and not himself.

The subject of my third Legend is a woman, and one whose name is unknown in history. It was indeed unknown to myself till the publication of Mr. Rose's answer to Fox's History of James II., in the notes to which work a very interesting account of her will be found, given in extracts from Lady Murray's narrative, a MS. hitherto unpublished. My ignorance regarding her is the more extraordinary, as she married into a family of my own name, from which it is supposed, my forefathers took their descent; one of my ancestors also being the friend of that Baillie of Jerviswood, who suffered for the religion and independence of his country, and engaged in the same noble cause which obliged him, about the time of Jerviswood's death, to fly from Scotland and spend several years in a foreign land. Had her character, claiming even this very distant and slight connection with it, been known to me in my youthful days, I might have suspected that early association had something to do in the great admiration with which it has inspired me; but becoming first acquainted with it when the season of ardour and enthusiasm is past, I believe I may be acquitted from all charge of partiality. It appears to me that a more perfect female character could scarcely be imagined; for while she is daily exercised in all that is useful, enlivening and endearing, her wisdom and courage on every extraordinary and difficult occasion, give a full assurance to the mind, that the devoted daughter of Sir Patrick Hume, and the tender helpmate of Baillie, would have made a most able and magnanimous queen.

The account we have of her is given by her own children; but there is a harmonious consistency, and an internal evidence of truth through the whole of it, which forbids us to doubt. At any rate, the leading and most singular events of her life, mentioned in the inscription on her tomb, from the pen of Judge Burnet, must be true. But after having written the Legend from Mr. Rose's notes alone, I have been fortunate enough to see the original work from which they were taken; and, availing myself of this advantage, have added some passages to it which I thought would increase the interest of the whole, and set the character of the heroine in a still more favourable light. For this I am indebted to the kindness and liberality of Thomas Thomson, Esq. keeper of the Registers, Edinburgh, who will, I hope, be induced, ere long, to give such a curious and interesting manuscript to the public.

I might have selected for my heroine, women who, in high situations of trust, as sovereigns, regents, and temporary governors of towns, castles, or provinces, and even at the head of armies, have behaved with a wisdom and courage that would have been honourable for the noblest of the other sex. But to vindicate female courage and abilities has not been my aim. I wished to exhibit a perfection of character which is peculiar to woman, and makes her, in the family that is blessed with such an inmate, through every vicissitude of prosperity and distress, something which man can never be. He may indeed be, and often is, as tender and full of gentle offices as a woman; and she may be, and has often been found, on great occasions, as courageous, firm, and enterprising, as a man; but

the character of both will be most admired when these qualities cross them but transiently, like passing gleams of sunshine in a stormy day, and do not make the prevailing attribute of either. A man seldom becomes a careful and gentle nurse, but when actuated by strong affection; a woman is seldom roused to great and courageous exertion but when something most dear to her is in immediate danger: reverse the matter, and you deform the fair seemliness of both. It is from this general impression of their respective natures that tenderness in man is so pathetic, and valour in woman so sublime. A wise and benevolent Providence hath made them partake of each other's more peculiar qualities, that they may be meet and rational companions to one another—that man may be beloved, and woman regarded with respect.

What has been considered as the jealousy of man lest woman should become his rival, is founded, I believe, on a very different principle. In regard to mental acquirements of an abstruse or difficult kind, though a pretty general disapprobation of them, when found in the possession of women, is felt, and too often expressed in illiberal and unworthy phrase, yet, I apprehend, that had these been supposed to be cultivated without interfering with domestic duties, no prejudice would ever have been entertained against them. To neglect useful and appropriate occupations, for those which may be supposed to be nected with vanity, rather than with any other gratification, is always offensive. But if a woman possess that strong natural bent for learning which enables her to acquire it quickly, without prejudice to what is more necessary; or if her fortune be so ample that the greater part of her time reasonably remains at her own disposal, there are few men, I believe, who will be disposed to find fault with her for all that she may know, provided she make no vain display of her acquirements; and amongst those few, I will venture to say, there will not be one truly learned man to be found. Were learning chiefly confined to gownsmen, a country gentleman, who neglected his affairs and his husbandry to study the dead languages, would meet with as little quarter as she who is tauntingly called a learned lady. But as every one in the rank of a gentleman is obliged to spend so many years of his youth in learning Latin and Greek, whatever may be his natural bias or destined profession, he is never ridiculed, under any circumstances, for pursuing that which has already cost him so much labour. Women have this desirable privilege over the other sex, that they may be unlearned without any implied inferiority; and I hope our modern zeal for education will never proceed far enough to deprive them of this great advantage. At the same time they may avowedly and creditably possess as much learning, either in science or languages, as they can fairly and honestly attain, the neglect of more necessary occupations being here considered as approaching to a real breach of rectitude.

"My helpful child!" was the fond and grateful appellation bestowed upon our heroine, with her mother's dying blessing; and could the daughters of every family conceive the self-approbation and happiness of cheerful and useful occupation, the love of God and favour of man which is earned by this blessed character of helpfulness, how much vanity and weariness, and disappointment, and discontent, would be banish I from many a prosperous home! "It is more blessed to minister than be ministered unto," said the most perfect character that ever appeared in human form. Could any young person of ever such a listless or idle disposition, not entirely debased by selfishness, read, in the narrative alluded to, of the different occupations of Lady Griseld Baillie and a sister of hers, nearly of her own age, whose time was mostly spent in reading or playing on a musical instrument, and wish for one moment to have been the last mentioned lady, rather than the other?

But in preferring a heroine of this class for my Legend, I encountered a difficulty which, I fear, I have not been able to overcome; the want of events, and the most striking circumstance of the story belonging to the earlier part of it, while the familiar domestic details of her life, which so faithfully reveal the sweetest traits of her character, are associated in our imaginations with what is considered as vulgar and mean I have endeavoured by the selection I have made of things to be noticed, and in the expressions which convey them to the fancy, to offend, as little as might be, the fastidious reader; and I beg that he will on his part receive it with indulgence.

Of the few shorter pieces, contained in this small volume, I have little to say. The two first were originally written very rapidly for the amusement of a young friend, who was fond of frightful stories; but I have since endeavoured to correct some of the defects arising from hasty composition. The third is taken from a true, or at least traditional story. It was told to me by Sir George Beaumont, as one which he had heard from his mother, the late Lady Beaumont, who said it was a tradition belonging to the castle of some Baron in the north of England, where it was believed to have happened. It was recommended by him as a good subject for a ballad, and, with such a recommendation, I was easily tempted to endeavour, at least, to preserve its simple and striking circumstances, in that popular form. I have altered nothing of the story, nor have I added anything but the founding of the abbey and the Baron's becoming a monk, in imitation of the ending of that exquisite ballad, The Eve of St John, where so much is implied in so few words; the force and simplicity of which, I have always particularly admired, though I readily own (and the reader will have too much reason to agree

with me) that it is more easily admired than imitated.

'There is a nun in Dryburgh bower
Ne'er looks upon the sun;
There is a monk in Melrose tower,
He speaketh word to none.

That nun who ne'er beholds the day,
That monk who speaks to none,
That nun was Smaylho'mes Lady gay,
That monk the bold Baron.'

The fourth is taken from the popular story of Fadon, in the Blind Minstrel's Life of Wallace. That the hero, in those days of superstition, and under the influence of compunction for a hasty deed, might not have had some strong vision or dream, which, related to his followers, might give rise to such a story, I will not pretend to say. However, it could not, with propriety, find a place in a legend which rejects fiction. Yet, thinking it peculiarly fitted for the subject of a mysterious ballad, and being loth to lose it entirely, I have ventured to introduce it to the reader in its present form. Ballads of this character generally arrest the attention and excite some degree of interest. They must be very ill-written indeed if this fail to be the case; and if some modern ballads of extraordinary power, from a very witching pen, have not rendered the public less easy to please than they formerly were, I may hope that these productions, slight as they are, will at least be received with forbearance.

Having now said all which, I believe, I may reasonably say in explanation and behalf of the contents of my book, I leave my reader to peruse it, perhaps, in nearly the same disposition regarding it as if I had said nothing at all on the subject. But I have the satisfaction, at least, of having endeavoured to do justice to myself, and shall not be condemned unheard.

WILLIAM WALLACE.

I.

INSENSIBLE to high heroic deeds,
Is there a spirit clothed in mortal weeds,
Who at the Patriot's moving story,
Devoted to his country's good,
Devoted to his country's glory,
Shedding for freemen's rights his generous blood;—
List'neth not with breath heaved high,
Quiv'ring nerve, and glistening eye,
Feeling within a spark of heavenly flame,
That with the hero's worth may humble kindred claim?
If such there be, still let him plod
On the dull foggy paths of care,
Nor raise his eyes from the dank sod
To view creation fair:
What boots to him the wond'rous works of God?
His soul with brutal things hath ta'en its earthy lair.

II.

Come, youths, whose eyes are forward cast
And in the future see the past,—
The past, as winnow'd in the early mind
With husk and prickle left behind!
Come; whether under lowland vest
Or, by the mountain-tartan prest,
Your gen'rous bosoms heave;
Pausing a while in thoughtful rest,
My legend lay receive.
Come, aged sires, who love to tell
What fields were fought, what deeds were done;
What things in olden times befell,—
Those good old times, whose term is run!
Come ye, whose manly strength with pride
Is breasting now the present tide
Of worldly strife, and cast aside
A hasty glance at what hath been!
Come, courtly dames, in silken sheen,
And ye, who under thatched roofs abide;
Yea, ev'n the barefoot child by cottage fire,
Who doth some shreds of northern lore acquire,
By the stirr'd embers' scanty light,—
List to my legend lay of Wallace wight.

III.

Scotland, with breast unmail'd, had sheath'd her sword,
Stifling each rising curse and hopeless prayer,
And sunk beneath the Southron's faithless lord
In sullen, deep despair.
The hold and castles of the land
Were by her hateful foemen mann'd.
To revels in each stately hall,
Did tongues of foreign accent call,
Where her quell'd chiefs must tamely bear
From braggard pride the taunting jeer.
Her harvest-fields, by strangers reap'd,
Were in the stranger's garner heap'd.
The tenant of the poorest cot,
Seeing the spoiler from his door
Bear unreproved his hard-earn'd store,
Blush'd thus to be, and be a Scot.
The very infant at his mother's beck,
Tho' with writh'd lip and scowling eye,
Was taught to keep his lisping tongue in check,
Nor curse the Southron passing by.

IV.

Baron brave and girded knight,
The tyrant's hireling slaves could be;
Nor graced their state, nor held their right.
Alone upon his rocky height,
The eagle rear'd his unstain'd crest,
And, soaring from his cloudy nest,
Turn'd to the sun his daring eye,
And wing'd at will the azure sky,
For he alone was free.

V.

Oh! who so base as not to feel
The pride of freedom once enjoy'd,
Tho' hostile gold or hostile steel
Have long that bliss destroy'd!
The meanest drudge will sometimes vaunt
Of independent sires, who bore
Names known to fame in days of yore,
'Spite of the smiling stranger's taunt;
But recent freedom lost—what heart
Can bear the humbling thought—the quick'ning, mad'ning smart!

VI.

Yes, Caledonian hearts did burn,
And their base chain in secret spurn;
And, bold upon some future day,
Swore to assert Old Scotland's native sway;
But 'twas in fitful thoughts that pass'd in thought away.
Tho' musing in lone cave or forest deep,
Some generous youths might all indignant weep;
Or in the vision'd hours of sleep,
Gird on their swords for Scotland's right,
And from her soil the spoiler sweep,
Yet all this bold emprise pass'd with the passing night.

VII.

But in the woods of Allerslie,
Within the walls of good Dundee,
Or by the pleasant banks of Ayr,
Wand'ring o'er heath or upland fair,
Existed worth without alloy,
In form a man, in years a boy,

Whose nightly thoughts for Scotland's weal,
Which clothed his form in mimick steel,
Which helm'd his brow, and glav'd his hand,
To drive the tyrant from the land,
Pass'd not away with passing sleep;
But did, as danger nearer drew,
Their purpos'd bent the firmer keep,
And still the bolder grew.

VIII.

'Tis pleasant in his early frolick feats,
Which fond tradition long and oft repeats,
The op'ning of some dauntless soul to trace,
Whose bright career of fame a country's annals grace;
Yet this brief legend must forbear to tell
The bold adventures that befell
The stripling Wallace, light and strong,
The shady woods of Clyde among,
Where, roaring o'er its rocky walls,
The water's headlong torrent falls,
Full, rapid, powerful, flashing to the light,
Till sunk the boiling gulf beneath,
It mounts again like snowy wreath,
Which, scatter'd by contending blasts,
Back to the clouds their treasure casts,
A ceaseless wild turmoil, a grand and wondrous sight!
Or, climbing Carthland's Craigs, that high
O'er their pent river strike the eye,
Wall above wall, half veil'd, half seen,
The pendant folds of wood between,
With jagged breach, and rift, and scar,
Like the scorch'd wreck of ancient war,
And seem, to musing fancy's gaze,
The ruin'd holds of other days.
His native scenes, sublime and wild,
Where oft the youth his hours beguil'd,
As forester with bugle horn;
As angler in the pooly wave;
As fugitive in lonely cave,
Forsaken and forlorn!
When still, as foeman cross'd his way,
Alone, defenceless, or at bay,
He raised his arm for freemen's right,
And on proud robbers fell the power of Wallace wight.

IX.

There is a melancholy pleasure
In tales of hapless love;—a treasure
From which the sadden'd bosom borrows
A short respite from present sorrows,
And ev'n the gay delight to feel,
As down young cheeks the soft tears steal;
Yet will I not that woeful tale renew,
And in light hasty words relate
How the base Southron's arm a woman slew,
And robb'd him of his wedded mate.
The name of her, who shar'd his noble breast,
Shall be remember'd and be blest.
A sweeter lay, a gentler song,
To those sad woes belong!

X.

As light'ning from some twilight cloud,
At first but like a streaky line
In the hush'd sky, with fitful shine
Its unregarded brightness pours,
Till from its spreading, darkly volumed shroud
The bursting tempest roars;
His countrymen with faithless gaze
Beheld his valour's early blaze.

XI.

But rose at length with swelling fame
The honours of his deathless name;
Till, to the country's farthest bound,
All gen'rous hearts stirr'd at the sound;
Then Scotland's youth with new-wak'd pride,
Flock'd gladly to the hero's side,
In harness braced, with burnish'd brand,
A brave and noble band!

XII.

Lenox, Douglas, Campbell, Hay,
Boyd, Scrimger, Ruthven, Haliday,
Gordon, Crawford, Keith, were there;
Lauder, Lundy, Cleland, Kerr,
Steven, Ireland's vagrant lord;
Newbiggen, Fraser, Rutherford,
Dundas and Tinto, Currie, Scott;
Nor be in this brave list forgot
A Wallace of the hero's blood,
With many patriots staunch and good;
And first, though latest nam'd, there came,
Within his gen'rous breast to hold
A brother's place,—true war-mate bold!
The good, the gallant Grapam.

XIII.

Thus grown to strength, on Biggar's well-fought field
He made on marshall'd host his first essay;
Where Edward's gather'd powers, in strong array,
Did to superior skill and valour yield,
And gain'd the glorious day.

XIV.

Then at the forest kirk, that spot of ground
Long to be honour'd, flush'd with victory,
Crowded the Scottish worthies, bold and free,
Their noble chieftain round;
Where many a generous heart beat high
With glowing cheek and flashing eye,
And many a portly figure trod
With stately steps the trampled sod.
Banners in the wind were streaming;
In the morning light were gleaming
Sword, and spear, and burnish'd mail,
And crested helm, and avantail,
And tartan plaids, of many a hue,
In flickering sunbeams brighter grew,
While youthful warriors' weapons ring
With hopeful, wanton brandishing.

XV.

There, midmost in the warlike throng,
Stood William Wallace, tall and strong;
Towering far above the rest,
With portly mien and ample breast,
Brow and eye of high command,
Visage fair, and figure grand:

Ev'n to the dullest peasant standing by,
Who fasten'd still on him a wondering eye,
He seem'd the master-spirit of the land.

XVI.

O for same magic power to give
In vision'd form what then did live!
That group of heroes to pourtray,
Who from their trammell'd country broke
The hateful tyrant's galling yoke
On that eventful day!

XVII.

Behold! like changeful streamers of the North,
Which tinge at times the wintry night,
With many hues of glowing light,
Their momentary forms break forth
To fancy's gifted sight.
Each in his warlike panoply
With sable plumage waving high,
And burnish'd sword in sinewy hand,
Appears a chieftain of command,
Whose will, by look, or sign to catch,
A thousand eager vassals watch.
What tho' those warriors, gleaming round,
On peaceful death-bed never lay,
But each, upon his fated day,
His end on field or scaffold found;
Oh! start not at the vision bright,
As if it were a ghastly sight!
For, 'midst their earthly coil, they knew
Feelings of joy so keen, so true.
As he who feels, with up-rais'd eye,
Thanks Heaven for life, and cannot rue
The gift, be what it may the death that he shall die.

XVIII.

Warden of Scotland, (not ashamed
A native right of rule to own
In worth and valour matchless shown)
They William Wallace there proclaim'd;
And there, exultingly, each gallant soul,
Ev'n proudly yielded to such high controul.
Greater than aught a tyrant ere achiev'd,
Was power so given, and so receiv'd.

XIX.

This truth full well King-Edward knew,
And back his scatter'd host he drew,
Suing for peace with prudent guile;
And Wallace in his mind, the while,
Scanning with wary, wise debate
The various dangers of the state,
Desire of further high revenge foregoes
To give the land repose.
But smother'd hatred, in the garb of peace,
Did not, mean time, from hostile cunning cease;
But still more cruel deeds devis'd,
In that deceitful seeming guised.

XX.

The Southron rulers, phrasing fair
Their notice, summon'd lord, and laird, and knight,
To hold with them an ancient court of right,
At the good town, so named, their court of Ayr.
And at this general summons came
The pride and hope of many a name,
The love and anxious care of many a gentle dame.

XXI.

Ent'ring the fatal Barns, fair sight!
Went one by one the manly train,
But neither baron, laird, nor knight,
Did e'er return again.
A heaven-commission'd friend that day
Stopp'd Wallace, hast'ning on his way,
(Who, by some seeming chance detain'd,
Had later at his home remain'd,)
The horse's bridle sternly grasp'd,
And then for rueful utterance gasp'd.
"Oh! go not to the Barns of Ayr!
"Kindred and friends are murder'd there.
"The faithless Southrons, one by one,
"On them the hangman's task hath done.
"Oh! turn thy steed, and fearful ruin shun!"
He, shudd'ring, heard, with visage pale,
Which quickly chang'd to wrath's terrific hue;
And then apace came sorrow's bursting wail;
The noble heart could weep that could not quail,
"My friends, my kinsmen, war-mates, bold and true!
"Met ye a villain's end! Oh is it so with you!"

XXII.

The hero turn'd his chafing steed,
And to the wild woods bent his speed.
But not to keep in hiding there,
Or give his sorrow to despair,
For the fierce tumult in his breast
To speedy, dreadful action press'd.
And there within a tangled glade,
List'ning the courser's coming tread,
With hearts that shar'd his ire and grief,
A faithful band receiv'd their chief.

XXIII.

In Ayr the guilty Southrons held a feast,
When that dire day its direful course had run,
And laid them down, their weary limbs to rest
Where the foul deed was done.
But ere beneath the cottage thatch
Cocks had crow'd the second watch;
When sleepers breathe in heavy plight,
Press'd with the visions of the night,
And spirits, from unhallow'd ground,
Ascend, to walk their silent round;
When trembles dell or desert heath,
The witches' orgy dance beneath,—
To the roused Warder's fearful gaze,
The Barns of Ayr were in a blaze.

XXIV.

The dense, dun smoke was mounting slow
And stately, from the flaming wreck below,
And mantling far aloft in many a volumed wreath;
Whilst town and woods, and ocean wide did lie,

Tinctur'd like glowing furnace-iron, beneath
Its awful canopy.
Red mazy sparks soon with the dense smoke
blended,
And far around like fiery sleet descended.
From the scorch'd and crackling pile
Fierce burst the growing flames the while;
Thro' creviced wall and buttress strong,
Sweeping the rafter'd roofs along;
Which, as with sudden crash they fell,
Their raging fierceness seem'd to quell,
And for a passing instant spread
O'er land and sea a lurid shade;
Then with increasing brightness, high
In spiral form, shot to the sky
With momentary height so grand,
That chill'd beholders breathless stand.

XXV.

Thus rose and fell the flaming surgy flood,
'Till fencing round the gulphy light,
Black, jagg'd, and bare, a fearful sight!
Like ruin grim of former days,
Seen 'thwart the broad sun's setting rays,
The guilty fabric stood.

XXVI.

And dreadful are the deaths, I ween,
Which midst that fearful wreck have been.
The pike and sword, and smoke and fire,
Have minister'd to vengeful ire.
New-waked wretches stood aghast
To see the fire-flood in their rear,
Close to their breast the pointed spear,
And in wild horrour yell'd their last.

XXVII.

But what dark figures now emerge
From the dread gulph and cross the light,
Appearing on its fearful verge,
Each like an armed sprite?
Whilst one above the rest doth tower,—
A form of stern gigantic power,
Whirling from his lofty stand
The smould'ring stone or burning brand?
Those are the leagued for Scotland's native
right,
Whose clashing arms rang Southron's knell,
When to their fearful work they fell,—
That form is Wallace wight.

XXVIII.

And he like Heaven's impetuous blast
Which stops not on its mission'd way,
By early morn, in strong array,
Onward to Glasgow past;
Where English Piercy held the rule;
Too noble and too brave to be a tyrant's tool.
A summon'd court should there have been,
But there far other coil was seen.
With fellest rage, in lane and street,
Did harness'd Scot and Southron meet;
Well fought and bloody was the fierce affray:
But Piercy was by Wallace slain,
Who put to rout his num'rous train,
And gain'd the town by noon of day.

XXIX.

Nor paused he there, for ev'ning tide
Saw him at Bothwell's hostile gate,
Which might not long assault abide,
But yielded to its fate.
And on from thence, with growing force,
He held his rapid, glorious course;
Whilst his roused clansmen, braced and bold,
As town and castle, tower and hold,
To the resistless victor fell,
His patriot numbers swell.
Thus when with current full and strong,
The wintry river bears along
Thro' mountain pass, and frith, and plain;—
Streams that from many sources pour,
Answer from far its kindred roar,
And deep'ning echoes roar again.
From its hill of heathy brown,
The muirland streamlet hastens down;
The mountain torrent from its rock,
Shoots to the glen with furious shock;
E'en runlet low, and sluggish burn,
Speed to their chief with many a mazy turn,
And, in his mingled strength, roll proudly to
the main.

XXX.

O'er Stirling's towers his standard plays,
Lorn owns his rule, Argyle obeys.
In Angus, Merns, and Aberdeen,
Nor English Lord nor Cerf is seen;
Dundee alone averts King Edward's fate,
And Scotland's warden thunders at her gate.

XXXI.

But there his eager hopes are cross'd;
For news are brought of English host,
Which fast approaching thro' the land,
At Stirling mean to make their stand.
Faint speaks the haggard breathless scout,
Like one escaped from bloody rout,—
"On, Cressingham, and Warren lead
"The martial'd host with stalwart speed;
"It numbers thirty thousand men,
"And thine, bold chieftain, only ten."

XXXII.

But higher tower'd the chieftain's head,
Broad grew his breast with ampler spread;
O'er cheek and brow the deep flush past,
And to high Heaven his eyes he cast;
Right plainly spoke that silent prayer,
"My strength and aid are there!"
Then look'd he round with kindly cheer
On his brave war-mates standing near,
Who scann'd his face with eager eye
His secret feelings to descry.
"Come, hearts! who, on your native soil,
"For Scotland's cause have bravely stood,
"Come, brace ye for another broil,
"And prove your generous blood.
"Let us but front the tyrant's train,
"And he who lists may count their numbers
then."

XXXIII.

Nor dull of heart, nor slow were they
Their noble Leader to obey.
Cheer'd with loud shouts he gave his prompt command,
Forthwith to bound them on their way.
And straight their eager march they take
O'er hill and heath, o'er burn and brake,
Till marshall'd soon in dark array,
Upon their destin'd field of war they stand.

XXXIV.

Behind them lay the hardy north;
Before, the slowly winding Forth
Flow'd o'er the noiseless sand;
Its full broad tide with fossy sides,
Which east and west the land divides,
By wooden bridge was spann'd.
Beyond it, on a craggy slope,
Whose chimney'd roofs the steep ridge cope,
There smoked an ancient town;
While higher on the firm-based rock,
Which oft had braved war's thunder-shock,
Embattled turrets frown.
A frith, with fields and woods, and hamlets gay,
And mazy waters, slyly seen,
Glancing thro' shades of alder green,
Wore eastward from the sight to distance grey:
While broomy knoll and rocky peak,
And heathy mountains, bare and bleak,
A lofty screen on either hand,
Majestic rose, and grand.

XXXV.

Such was the field on which with dauntless pride
They did their coming foe abide;
Nor waited long till from afar
Were spy'd their moving ranks of war,
Like rising storm, which, from the western main,
Bears on in seried length its cloudy train;—
Slowly approaching on the burthen'd wind,
Moves each dark mass, and still another lowers behind.
And soon upon the bridge appears,
Darkly rising on the light,
Nodding plumes and pointed spears,
And, crowding close, full many a warlike knight,
Who from its narrow gorge successive pour,
To form their ranks upon the northern shore.

XXXVI.

Now, with notes of practis'd skill,
English trumpets, sounding shrill,
The battle's boastful prelude give,
Which answer prompt and bold receive
From Scottish drum's long rowling beat,
And,—sound to valiant clansmen sweet!—
The highland pipe, whose lengthen'd swell
Of warlike pibroch, rose and fell,
Like wailings of the midnight wind,
With voice of distant streams combin'd,
While mountain, rock, and dell, the martial din repeat.

XXXVII.

Then many a high-plumed gallant rear'd his head,
And proudly smote the ground with firmer tread,
Who did, ere close of ev'ning, lye
With ghastly face turn'd to the sky,
No more again the rouse of war to hear.
And many for the combat burn'd,
Who never from its broil return'd,
Kindred or home to cheer.
How short the term that shall divide
The firm-nerv'd youth's exerted force,—
The warrior, glowing in his pride,
From the cold stiffen'd corse!
A little term, pass'd with such speed,
As would in courtly revel scarce suffice,
Mated with lady fair, in silken guise,
The measur'd dance to lead.

XXXVIII.

His soldiers, firm as living rock,
Now braced them for the battle's shock;
And watch'd their chieftain's keen looks glancing
From marshall'd clans to foes advancing;
Smiled with the smile his eye that lighten'd,
Glow'd with the glow his brow that bright-en'd:
But when his burnish'd brand he drew,
His towering form terrific grew,
And every Scotchman, at the sight,
Felt thro' his nerves a giant's might,
And drew his patriot sword with Wallace wight.

XXXIX.

For what of thrilling sympathy,
Did e'er in human bosom vie
With that which stirs the soldier's breast,
When, high in god-like worth confess'd,
Some noble leader gives command,
To combat for his native land?
No; friendship's freely-flowing tide,
The soul expanding; filial pride,
That hears with craving, fond desire
The bearings of a gallant sire;
The yearnings of domestic bliss,
Ev'n love itself will yield to this.

XL.

Few words the lofty hero utter'd,
But deep response was widely mutter'd,
Like echo'd echoes, circling round
Some mountain lake's steep rocky bound.

XLI.

Then rush'd they fiercely on their foes,
And loud o'er drum and war-pipe rose
The battle's mingled roar.
The eager shout, the weapon's clash;
The adverse ranks' first closing crash,
The sullen hum of striving life,
The busy beat of trampling strife,
From castle, rocks, and mountains round,
Down the long firth, a grand and awful sound,
A thousand echoes bore.

XLII.

Spears cross'd spears, a bending grove,
As front to front the warriors strove.
'Thro' the dust-clouds, rising dun,
Their burnish'd brands flash'd to the sun
With quickly changing, shiv'ring light,
Like streamers on the northern night;
While arrow-showers came hurtling past,
Like splinter'd wreck driven by the blast,
What time fierce winter is contending,
With Norway's pines, their branches rending.

XLIII.

Long pennants, flags, and banners move
The fearful strife of arms above,
Not as display'd in colours fair,
They floated on the morning air;
But with a quick, ungentle motion,
As sheeted sails, torn by the blast,
Flap round some vessel's rocking mast
Upon a stormy ocean.

XLIV.

Opposing ranks, that onward bore,
In tumult mix'd, are ranks no more;
Nor aught discern'd of skill or form;—
All a wild, bick'ring, steely storm!
While oft around some fav'rite Chieftain's crest,
The turmoil thick'ning, darkly rose,
As on rough seas the billow grows,
O'er lesser waves high-heaved, but soon deprest.
So gallant Græme, thou noble Scot!
Around thee rose the fearful fray,
And other brave compeers of bold essay,
Who did not spare their mothers' sons that day,
And ne'er shall be forgot.

XLV.

But where the mighty Wallace fought,
Like spirit quick, like giant strong,
Plunging the foe's thick ranks among,
Wide room in little time was hew'd,
And grizly sights around were strew'd;
Recoil'd aghast the helmed throng,
And every hostile thing to earth was brought.
Full strong and hardy was the foe
To whom he gave a second blow.
Many a Knight and Lord
Fell victims to his sword,
And Cressingham's proud crest lay low.

XLVI.

And yet, all Southrons as they were,
Their ranks dispers'd, their leader slain,
Passing the bridge with dauntless air,
They still came pouring on the plain;
But weaken'd of its rafter'd strength,
'Tis said by warlike craft, and trod
By such successive crowds, at length
The fabrick fell with all its living load.
Loud was the shriek the sinking Southrons gave,
Thus dash'd into the deep and booming wave.
For there a fearful death had they,
Clutching each floating thing in vain,
And struggling rose and sunk again,
Who, 'midst the battle's loud affray,
Had the fair meed of honour sought,
And on the field like lions fought.

XLVII.

And there, upon that field—a bloody field,
Where many a wounded youth was lying,
And many dead and many dying,
Did England's arms to Scotland's heroes yield.
The close confusion opening round,
The wild pursuit's receding sound,
Is ringing in their ears, who low
On cloated earth are laid, nor know,
When those who chase and those who fly,
With hasty feet come clatt'ring by,
Or who hath won or who hath lost;
Save when some dying Scotchman lifts his head,
And, asking faintly how the day hath sped,
At the glad news, half from the ground
Starts up, and gives a cheering sound,
And waves his hand, and yields the ghost.
A smile is on the corse's cheek,
Stretch'd by the heather bush, on death-bed bare and bleak.

XLVIII.

With rueful eyes the wreck of that dire hour,
The Southron's yet unbroken power,
As on the river's adverse shore they stood,
Silent beheld, till, like a mountain flood,
Rush'd Stirling's castled warriors to the plain;
Attack'd their now desponding force,
And fiercely press'd their hasty course
Back to their boasted native soil again.

XLIX.

Of foes so long detested,—fear'd,
Were towns and castles quickly clear'd;
Thro' all the land at will might freemen range:
Nor slave nor tyrant there appear'd;
It was a blessed change!

L.

The peasant's cot and homely farm,
Hall-house and tower, secure from harm
Or lawless spoil, again became
The cheerful charge of wife or dame.
'Neath humble roofs, from rafter slung
The harmless spear, on which was hung
The flaxen yarn in spindles coil'd,
And leathern pouch and hozen soil'd,
And rush or osier creel *, that held
Both field and household gear; whilst swell'd
With store of Scotland's fav'rite food,
The seemly sack in corner stood;
Remains of what the foe had left;
Glad sight to folks so long bereft!
And look'd at oft and wisely spared,
Tho' still with poorer neighbours shared.
The wooden quaigh † and trencher placed
On the shelv'd wall, its rudeness graced.

* Creel, the common Scotch name for basket.
† Quaigh, a stained drinking cup.

Beneath the pot red faggots glanced,
And on the hearth the spindle danced,
As housewife's slight, so finely true,
The lengthen'd thread from distaff drew,
While she, belike, sang ditty shrill
Of Southron louns with lengthen'd trill.

LI.

In castle hall with open gate,
The noble Lady kept her state,
With girdle clasp'd by gem of price,
Buckle or hasp of rare device,
Which held, constrain'd o'er bodice tight,
Her woollen robe of colours bright;
And with bent head and tranquil eye,
And gesture of fair courtesy,
The stranger guest bade to her board
Tho' far a field her warlike lord.
A board where smoked on dishes clear
Of massy pewter, sav'ry cheer,
And potent ale was foaming seen
O'er tankards bright of silver sheen,
Which erst, when foemen bore the sway,
Beneath the sod deep buried lay.
For household goods, from many a hoard,
Were now to household use restored.

LII.

Neighbours with neighbours join'd, begin
Their cheerful toil, whilst mingled din
Of saw or hammer cleave the air,
The roofless bigging * to repair,
The woodman fells the gnarled tree,
The ploughman whistles on the lea;
The falkner keen his bird lets fly,
As lordlings gaze with upcast eye;
The arrow'd sportsman strays at will,
And fearless strays o'er moor and hill;
The traveller pricks along the plain;
The herdboys shout and children play;
Scotland is Scotland once again,
And all are boon and gay.

LIII.

Thus, freedom from a grievous yoke,
Like gleam of sunshine o'er them broke;
And souls, when joy and peace were new,
Of every nature, kindlier grew.
It was a term of liberal dealing,
And active hope and friendly feeling;
Thro' all the land might freemen range,
It was a blessed change!

LIV.

So, when thro' forest wild hath past
The mingled fray of shower and blast,
Tissue of threaded gems is worn
By flower and fern and brier and thorn,
While the scourged oak and shaken pine,
Aloft in brighten'd verdure shine.
Then Wallace to St. Johnston went,
And thro' the country quickly sent
Summons to burgher, knight, and lord,
Who, there convened, with one accord,
Took solemn oath with short debate,
Of fealty to the state,
Until a King's acknowledged, rightful sway,—
A native King, they should with loyal hearts obey.
And he with foresight wise, to spare
Poor Scotland, scourged, exhausted, bare,
Whose fields unplough'd, and pastures scant,
Had brought her hardy sons to want,
His conquering army southward led,
Which was on England's plenty fed:
And there, I trow, for many months they took
Spoil of the land which ill that hateful change could brook.

LV.

Edward, meantime, asham'd and wroth
At such unseemly foil, and loth
So to be bearded, sent defiance
To Scotland's chief, in sure reliance
That he, with all which he may southward bring,
Of warlike force, dare not encounter England's King.

LVI.

But Wallace, on the day appointed,
Before this scepter'd and anointed,
Who, strength'en'd with a num'rous host,
There halted, to maintain his boast,
On Stanmore's height, their battle ground,
With all his valiant Scots was found.
A narrow space of stony moor,
With heath and likens mottled o'er,
And cross'd with dew-webs wiry sheen,
The adverse party lay between.
When upland mists had worn away,
And blue sky over-head was clearing,
And things of distant ken appearing
Fair on the vision burst, that martial grand array.
The force on haughty Edward's side,
Spearmen and archers were descry'd,
Line beyond line, spread far and wide,
Receding from the eye;
While bristling pikes distinct and dark,
As traced aloft with edgy mark,
Seem'd graven on the sky;
And armed Knights arm'd steeds bestriding;
Their morions glancing bright,
And to and fro their gay squires riding
In warlike geer bedight.
O'er all the royal standard flew,
With crimson folds of gorgeous hue,
And near it, ranged, in colours gay,
Inferior flags and banners play,
As broad-wing'd hawk keeps soaring high,
Circled by lesser birds, that wheeling round him fly.
Huge waggon, sleaded car, and wain,
With dark, piled loads, a heavy train,
Store-place of arms and yeoman's cheer,
Frown'd in the further rear.

LVII.

And martial'd on the northern side,
The northern ranks the charge abide,

* Bigging, house or building of any kind, but generally rustic and mean.

In numbers few, but stout of heart,
Their nation's honour to assert.

LVIII.

Thus on the field with clans and liegemen good,
England's great King, and Scotland's Warden stood.
That Monarch proud, did rightly claim
'Mongst Europe's Lords the fairest fame,
And had, in cause of Christentie,
Fought with bold Saracens right gallantly.
That Warden was the noblest man
That e'er grac'd nation, race, or clan,
And grasp'd within his brave right hand
A sword, which from the dust had rais'd his native land.

LIX.

Who had not cried, that look'd upon
So brave and grand a sight,
" What stalwart deeds shall here be done
" Before the close of night!"
But Edward mark'd with falt'ring will,
The Scottish battle ranged with skill,
Which spoke the Leader's powerful mind.
On England's host that number'd twice their foes,
But newly raised, nor yet enured to blows,
He rueful look'd, his purpose fail'd,
He look'd again, his spirit quail'd,
And battle gage declin'd.

LX.

And thus did he to Wallace yield,
The bloodless honours of the field.
But as the Southron ranks withdrew,
Scarcely believing what he saw,
The wary Chief might not expose
His soldiers to returning foes,
Or ambush'd snare, and gave the order,
With beat of drum and trumpet sounding,
The air with joyous shouts resounding,
To cross with homeward steps the English border.

LXI.

Scotland thus, from foes secure,
Her prudent Chieftain to enure
His nobles still to martial toil,
Sought contest on a distant soil;
And many a young and valiant knight,
For foreign wars were with their leader dight,
And soon upon the seas careering
In gallant ship, whose pennants play,
Waving and curling in the air,
With changeful hues of colour fair,
Themselves as gallant, boon, and gay,
Their course with fav'ring breezes steering,
To friendly France they held their way.

LXII.

And they upon the ocean met
With warlike fleet, and sails full set,
De Longoville, that bold outlaw,
Whose name kept mariners in awe.
This man, with all his desp'rate crew
Did Wallace on the waves subdue.
One Scottish ship the pirate thought
As on her boarded deck he fought,
Cheer'd by his sea-mates' warlike cries,
A sure and easy prize.
But Wallace's mighty arm he felt;
Yea, at his conqueror's feet he knelt;
And there disdained not to crave
And take the mercy of the brave;
For still, as thing by nature fit,
The brave unto the brave are knit.
Thus natives of one parent land,
In crowded mart, on foreign strand,
With quick glance recognize each other;
" That mien! that step! it is a brother!
" Tho' mingled with a meaner race,
In foreign garb, I know that face,
" His features beam like those I love,
" His limbs with mountain vigour move,
" And tho' so strange and alien grown,
" The kindred tie my soul will own."
De Longoville, ev'n from that hour, a knight,
True to his native King, true to the right,
Fought with the Scottish hero to the end,
In many a bloody field, his tried and valiant friend.

LXIII.

And nobly in the lists of France,
Those noble Scots with brand and lance,
'Midst foreign knights and warriours blended,
In generous rivalry contended,
Whilst their brave Chieftain taught them still,
The soldier's dext'rous art and leader's nobler skill.

LXIV.

But English Edward, tired the while
Of life inert and covert guile,
Most faithless to the peace so lately made,
Was northward bound again, poor Scotland to invade.
Then Wallace, with his valiant band,
By Scotland's faithful sons recall'd,
Whom foreign yoke full sorely gall'd,
Must raise again his glaved hand
To smite the shackles from his native land.

LXV.

Brave hearts, who had in secret burn'd,
To see their country bear the yoke,
Hearing their Warden was return'd,
Forth from their secret hidings broke,
Wood, cave, or mountain-cliff, and ran
To join the wond'rous man.

LXVI.

It was a sight to chase despair,
His standard floating on the air,
Which, curling oft with courteous wave,
Still seem'd to beckon to the brave.
And when approach'd within short space,
They saw his form and knew his face,—
That brow of hope, that step of power,
Which stateliest strode in danger's hour,—
How glow'd each heart!—" Himself we see
" What, tho' but few and spent we be!
" The valiant heart despaireth never;
" The rightful cause is strongest ever;
" While Wallace lives, the land is free.

LXVII.

And he this flatt'ring hope pursued,
And war with England's King renew'd.
By martial stratagem he took
St. Johnston's stubborn town, a hold
So oft to faithless tyrants sold;
And cautious patriots then forsook
Ignoble shelter, kept so long,
And join'd in arms the ardent throng,
Who with the Warden southward past,
Like clouds increasing on the blast.

LXVIII.

Fife from the enemy he won,
And in his prosp'rous course held on,
Till Edward's strength, borne quickly down,
Held scarcely castle, tower, or town,
In all the southern shires; and then
He turn'd him to the north again;
Where from each wall'd defence, the foe expell'd,
Fled fast, Dundee alone still for King Edward held.

LXIX.

But the oppressor, blushing on his throne
To see the Scotch his warriours homeward chase,
And those, so lately crush'd, so powerful grown,
But ill could brook this sudden foul disgrace.
And he a base, unprincely compact made
With the red Cumming, traitor, black of heart!
Who to their wicked plot, in secret laid,
Some other chieftains gain'd with wily art.
And he hath dared again to send
A noble army, all too brave
For such unmanly, hateful end,
A land of freedom to enslave.
At Falkirk soon was England's proudest boast
Marshall'd in grand array, a brave and powerful host.

LXX.

But there with valiant foe to cope,
Soon on the field stood Scotland's hope,
Ev'n thirty thousand warriours, led
By noble Wallace, each, that day,
Had cheerfully his heart's blood shed,
The land to free from Southron's sway.
Alas! had all her high-born chieftains been
But as their leader and their clansmen true,
She on that field a glorious day had seen,
And made, tho' match'd with them, in number few,
King Edward's vaunted host that fatal day to rue.

LXXI.

But envy of a hero's fame,
Which so obscured each lofty name,
Was meanly harbour'd in the breast
Of those who bore an honour'd crest.
But most of all Red Cumming nursed
In his dark breast this bane accursed,
That, with the lust of power combin'd,
O'er-master'd all his wretched mind.
Then to Lord Stewart, secretly,
Spoke with smooth words the traitor sly,
Advising that, to grace his name,
Being by right confess'd the man,
Who ought to lead the Scottish van,
He should the proud distinction claim.
And thus, as one of low estate,
With lip of scorn, and brow elate,
Did he, by traitors back'd, the godlike Wallace bate.

LXXII.

"Must noble chiefs of high degree,
"Scotland's best blood, be led by thee?
"Thou, who art great but as the owl,
"Who plumed her wing from every fowl,
"And, hooting on her blasted tree,
"Would greater than the eagle be."

LXXIII.

"I stood," said Wallace "for the right,
"When ye in holes shrunk from the light;
"My plumes spread to the blazing sun
"Which coweringly ye sought to shun.
"Ye are the owls, who from the gloom
"Of cleft and cranny boasting come;
"Yet, hoot and chatter as ye may,
"I'll not to living man this day
"Resign the baton of command,
"Which Scotland's will gave to my hand,
"When spoil'd, divided, conquer'd, maim'd,
"None the dangerous honour claim'd;
"Nor, till my head lie in the dust,
"Will it betray her sacred trust."

LXXIV.

With flashing eye, and dark red brow,
He utter'd then a hasty vow,
Seeing the snare by treason laid,
So strongly wove, so widely spread,
And slowly from the field withdrew;
While, slow and silent at his back,
March'd on his wayward, cheerless track,
Ten thousand Scotchmen staunch and true,
Who would, let good or ill betide,
By noble Wallace still abide.

LXXV.

To them it was a strange and irksome sight,
As on a gentle hill apart they stood,
To see arm'd squadrons closing in the fight,
And the fierce onset to their work of blood.
To see their well-known banners as they moved
When dark opposing ranks with ranks are blending,
To see the lofty plumes of those they loved
Wave to and fro, with the brave foe contending.

LXXVI.

It hath been said, that gifted seer,
On the dark mountain's cloudy screen,
Forms of departed chiefs have seen,
In seeming armour braced with sword and spear,
O'erlooking some dire field of death,
Where warriours, warm with vital breath,

Of kindred lineage, urge the glorious strife;
They grasp their shadowy spears, and forward bend
In eager sympathy, as if to lend
Their aid to those, with whom in mortal life,
They did such rousing, noble conflict share,—
As if their phantom forms of empty air,
Still own'd a kindred sense of what on earth they were.

LXXVII.

So Wallace and his faithful band survey'd
The fatal fight, when Scotland was betray'd
By the false Cumming, who most basely fled,
And from the field a thousand warriours led.
O how his noble spirit burn'd
When from his post the traitor turn'd,
Leaving the Stuart sorely prest!
Who with his hardy Scots the wave
Of hostile strength did stoutly breast,
Like clansmen true and brave.
His visage flush'd with angry glow,
He clench'd his hand, and struck his brow.
His heart within his bosom beat
As it would break from mortal seat.
And when at last they yielded space,
And he beheld their piteous case,
Big scalding tears cours'd down his manly face.

LXXVIII.

But, ah! that fatal vow, that pride
Which doth in mortal breast reside,
Of noble minds the earthly bane,
His gen'rous impulse to restrain,
Had power in that dark moment! still
It struggled with his better will.
And who, superiour to this tempter's power,
Hath ever braved it in the trying hour?
O! only he, who, strong in heavenly grace
Taking from wretched thrals, of woman born,
Their wicked mockery, their stripes, their scorn,
Gave his devoted life for all the human race.
He view'd the dire disast'rous fight,
Like a fall'n cherubim of light,
Whose tossing form now tow'rs, now bends,
And with its darken'd self contends,
'Till many a brave and honour'd head
Lay still'd upon a bloody bed,
And Stuart, 'midst his clans, was number'd with the dead.

LXXIX.

Then rose he, like a rushing wind,
Which strath or cavern hath confin'd,
And straight through England's dark array,
With his bold mates, hew'd out his bloody way
A perilous daring way, and dear the cost!
For there the good, the gallant Grame he lost.
The gallant Grame, whose name shall long
Remember'd be in Scottish song.
And second still to Wallace wight
In lowland tale of winter's night,
Who loved him as he never loved another.
Low to the dust he bent his head,
Deep was his anguish o'er the dead.—
'That daring hand, that gentle heart!
'That lofty mind! and must we part?
'My brother, Oh, my brother!"

LXXX.

But how shall verse feign'd accents borrow,
To speak with words their speechless sorrow,
Who, on the trampled, blood-stain'd green
Of battle-field, must leave behind
What to their souls hath dearest been,
To stiffen in the wind?
The soldier there, or kern or chief,
Short parley holds with shrewdest grief;
Passing to noisy strife from what, alas!
Shall from his sadden'd fancy never pass,—
The look that ev'n thro' writhing pain,
Says, "shall we never meet again?"
The grasping hand or sign but known,
Of tenderness, to one alone:
The lip convulsed, the life's last shiver;
The new-closed eye, yet closed forever,
The brave must quit;—but, from the ground,
They, like th' enchafed lion bound.
Rage is their sorrow, grimly fed,
And blood the tears they shed.

LXXXI.

Too bold it were for me to tell,
How Wallace fought; how on the brave
The ruin of his anguish fell,
Ere from the field, his bands to save,
He broke away, and sternly bore
Along the stony Carron's shore.
The dark brown water, hurrying past,
O'er stone and rocky fragment cast
The white churn'd foam with angry bray,
And wheel'd and bubbled on its way,
And lash'd the margin's flinty guard,
By him unheeded and unheard;
Albeit, his mind, dark with despair,
And grief, and rage, was imaged there.

LXXXII.

And there, 'tis said, the Bruce descried
Him marching on the rival side.
The Bruce, whose right the country own'd,
(Had he possess'd a princely soul,
Disdaining Edward's base controul,)
To be upon her chair of power enthron'd.

LXXXIII.

"Ho, chieftain!" said the princely slave,
"Thou who pretend'st the land to save
"With rebel sword, opposed to me,
"Who should of right thy sovereign be:
"Think'st thou the Scottish crown to wear,
"Opposed by foreign power so great,
"By those at home of high estate?
"Cast the vain thought to empty air,
"Thy fatal mad ambition to despair."

LXXXIV.

"No!" Wallace answer'd; "I have shewn
"This sword to gain or power or throne
"Was never drawn; no act of mine
"Did e'er with selfish thought combine.

"Courage to dare, when others lay
"In brutish sloth, beneath the sway
"Of foreign tyranny; to save
"From thraldom, hateful to the brave,
"My friends, my countrymen; to stand
"For right and honour of the land,
"When nobler arms shrunk from the task,
"In a vile tyrant's smiles to bask,
"Hath been my simple warrant of command.
"And Scotland hath confirm'd it.—No;
"Nor shall this hand her charge forego,
"While Southron in the land is found
"To lord it o'er one rood of Scottish ground,
"Or till my head be low."

LXXXV.

Deep blush'd the Bruce, shame's conscious glow!
And own'd the hero's words were true;
And with his followers, sad and slow
To Edward's camp withdrew.

LXXXVI.

But fleeting was the mighty tyrant's boast,
(So says the learned clerk of old,
Who first our hero's story told,)
Fleeting the triumph of his numerous host.
For with the morning's early dawn
The Scottish soldiers, scatter'd wide,
Hath Wallace round his standard drawn,
Hath cheer'd their spirits, rous'd their pride,
And led them, where their foes they found,
All listless, scatter'd on the ground.
On whom with furious charge they set;
And many a valiant Southron met
A bloody death, waked from the gleam
And inward vision of a morning's dream;
Where Fancy in his native home
Led him through well-known fields to roam,
Where orchard, cot, and copse appear,
And moving forms of kindred dear;—
For in the rugged soldier's brain
She oft will fairy court maintain
Full gently, as beneath the dusk
Of hard-ribb'd shell, the pearl lies,
Or silken bud in prickly husk;—
He from her visions sweet unseals his eyes
To see the stern foe o'er him darkly bending,
To feel the deep-thrust blade his bosom rending.

LXXXVII.

So many Southrons there were slain,
So fatal was the vengeance ta'en,
That Edward, with enfeebled force,
Check'd mad ambition's unbless'd course,
And to his own fair land return'd again.

LXXXVIII.

Then Wallace thought from tower and town
And castled hold, as heretofore,
To pull each English banner down,
And free the land once more.
But ah! the generous hope he must forego!
Envy and pride have Scotland's cause betray'd;
All now are backward, listless, cold, and slow
His patriot arm to aid.

LXXXIX.

Then to St. Johnston, at his call,
Met burghers, knights and nobles all,
Who on the pressing summons wait,
A full assembly of the state.
There he resign'd his ensigns of command,
Which erst had kept the proudest Thanes in awe;
Retaining in that potent hand
Which thrice redeem'd its native land,
His simple sword alone, with which he stood
Midst all her haughty peers of princely blood,
The noblest man e'er Scotland saw.

XC.

And thus did Scottish Lords requite
Him, who, in many a bloody fight,
The country's champion stood; her people's Wallace wight.
O black ingratitude! thy seemly place
Is in the brutish, mean, and envious heart;
How is it then, thou dost so oft disgrace
The learn'd, the wise, the highly born, and art
Like cank'ring blights, the oak that scathe,
While fern and brushwood thrive beneath;
Like dank mould on the marble tomb,
While graves of turf with violets bloom.
Selfish ambition makes the lordliest Thane
A meaner man than him, who drives the loaded wain.

XCI.

And he with heavy heart his native shore
Forsook to join his old ally once more.
And in Guienna right valiant deeds he wrought;
Till under iron yoke opprest,
From north to south, from east to west,
His most unhappy groaning country sought
The generous aid she never sought in vain;
And with a son's unwearied love,
Which fortune, time, nor wrongs could move,
He to maintain her cause again repass'd the main.
The which right bravely he maintain'd;
And divers castles soon regain'd.
The sound ev'n of his whisper'd name
Revived in faithful hearts the smother'd flame,
And many secretly to join his standard came.
St. Johnston's leaguered walls at length
Were yielded to his growing strength;
And on, with still increasing force,
He southward held his glorious course.

XCII.

Then Edward thought the chief to gain,
And win him to his princely side
With treasur'd gold and honours vain,
And English manors fair and wide.
But with flush'd brow and angry eye
And words that shrewdly from him broke,
Stately and stern, he thus bespoke
The secret embassy.
"These kingly proffers made to me!
"Return and say it may not be.

"Lions shall troop with herdsmen's droves,
"And eagles roost with household doves,
"Ere William Wallace draw his blade
"With those who Scotland's rights invade.
"Yea, ev'n the touch of bondsman's chain,
"Would in my thrilling members wake
"A loathful sense of rankling pain
"Like coiling of a venom'd snake."
The King abash'd, in courtly hold,
Receiv'd this answer sooth and bold.

XCIII.

But ah! the fated hour drew near
That stopp'd him in his bold career.
Monteith, a name which from that day, I ween,
Hateful to every Scottish ear hath been,
Which highland kern and lowland hind
Have still with treacherous guile combin'd,—
The false Monteith, who under show
Of friendship, sold him to the foe,
Stole on a weary secret hour,
As sleeping and disarm'd he lay,
And to King Edward's vengeful power
Gave up the mighty prey.

XCIV.

At sight of noble Wallace bound,
The Southrons raised a vaunting sound,
As if the bands which round his limbs they drew,
Had fetter'd Scotland too.
They gaz'd and wonder'd at their mighty thrall;
Then nearer drew with movements slow,
And spoke in whispers deep and low.—
"This is the man to whom did yield
"The doughtiest knight in banner'd field,
"Whose threat'ning frown the boldest did appal!"
And, as his clanging fetters shook,
Cast on him oft a fearful look,
As doubting if in verity
Such limbs with iron might holden be:
While boldest spearmen by the pris'ner's side
With beating heart and haggard visage ride.

XCV.

Thus on to London they have past,
And in the Tower's dark dungeons cast
The hero; where, in silent gloom,
He must abide his fatal doom.
There pent, from earthly strife apart,
Scotland still rested on his heart,
Aye; every son that breathed her air
On cultur'd plain or mountain bare,
From chief in princely castle bred
To herdsman in his sheeling shed,
From war-dight youth to barefoot child,
Who picks in brake the berry wild;—
Her gleamy lakes and torrents clear,
Her towns, her towers, her forests green,
Her fields where warlike coil hath been,
Are to his soul most dear.

XCVI.

His fetter'd hands support a head,
Whose nodding plume had terrour spread
O'er many a face, e'en seen from far,
When moving in the ranks of war.
Lonely and dark, unseen of man,
But in that Presence whose keen eye
Can darkest breast of mortal scan,
The bitter thought and heavy sigh
Have way uncheck'd, and utter'd grief
Gave to his burthen'd heart a soothing, sad relief.

XCVII.

"It hath not to this arm been given
"From the fell tyrant's grinding hand
"To set thee free, my native land!
"I bow me to the will of Heaven!
"But have I run my course in vain?
"Shall thou in bondage still remain?
"The spoiler o'er thee still have sway,
"Till virtue, strength, and pride decay?
"O no! still panting to be free,
"Thy noblest hearts will think of me.
"Some brave, devoted, happier son
"Will do the work I would have done;
"And blest be he, who nobly draws
"His sword in Scotland's cause!"

XCVIII.

Perhaps his vision'd eye might turn
To him who fought at Bannockburn.
Or is it wildness to believe
A dying patriot may receive,
(Who sees his mortal span diminish'd
To nought, his generous task unfinish'd,)
A seeming fruitless end to cheer,
Some glimpses of the gifted seer?
O no! 'tis to his closing sight
A beacon on a distant height,—
The moon's new crescent, seen in cloudy kirtled night.

XCIX.

And much he strove with Christian grace,
Of those who Scotland's foes had been,
His soul's strong hatred to efface,
A work of grace, I ween!
Meekly he bow'd o'er bead and book,
And every worldly thought forsook.

C.

But when he on the scaffold stood,
And cast aside his mantling hood,
He eyed the crowd, whose sullen hum,
Did from ten thousand upcast faces come,
And armed guardsmen standing round,
As he was wont on battle-ground,
Where still with calm and portly air,
He faced the foe with visage bare;
As if with baton of command
And vassal chiefs on either hand,
Towering her marshall'd files between,
He Scotland's Warden still had been.
This flash of mortal feeling past,—
This gleam of pride, it was the last.
As on the cloud's dense skirt will play,
While the dark tempest rolls away,
One parting blaze; then thunders cease,
The sky is clear, and all is peace.

And he with ready will a nobler head
Than e'er was circled with a kingly crown,
Upon the block to headsman's stroke laid down,
And for his native land a generous victim bled.

CI.

What tho' that head o'er gate or tower,
Like felons on the cursed tree,
Visited by sun and shower,
A ghastly spectacle may be!
A fair renown, as years wear on,
Shall Scotland give her noblest son.
The course of ages shall not dim
The love that she shall bear to him.

CII.

In many a castle, town, and plain,
Mountain and forest, still remain
Fondly cherish'd spots, which claim
The proud distinction of his honour'd name.

CIII.

Swells the huge ruin's massy heap
In castled court, 'tis Wallace's keep.
What stateliest o'er the rest may lower
Of time-worn wall, where rook and daw,
With wheeling flight and ceaseless caw,
Keep busy stir, is Wallace's tower.
If thro' the green wood's hanging screen,
High o'er the deeply-bedded wave,
The mouth of arching cleft is seen
Yawning dark, 'tis Wallace's cave.
If o'er its jutting barrier grey,
Tinted by time, with furious din,
The rude crags silver'd with its sprey,
Shoot the wild flood, 'tis Wallace's lin.
And many a wood remains, and hill and glen
Haunted, 'tis said, of old by Wallace and his men.

CIV.

There schoolboy still doth haunt the sacred ground,
And musing oft its pleasing influence own,
As, starting at his footsteps' echo'd sound,
He feels himself alone.

CV.

Yea, ev'n the cottage matron, at her wheel,
Altho' with daily care and labour crost,
Will o'er her heart the soothing magic feel,
And of her country's ancient prowess boast;
While on the little shelf of treasured books,
For what can most of all her soul delight,
Beyond or ballad, tale, or jest, she looks,—
The history renown'd of Wallace wight.

CVI.

But chiefly to the soldier's breast
A thought of him will kindling come,
As waving high his bonnet's crest,
He listens to the rolling drum,
And trumpet's call and thrilling fife,
And bagpipes' loud and stormy strain,
Meet prelude to tumultuous strife
On the embattled plain.

CVII.

Whether in highland garb array'd,
With kirtle short and highland plaid,
Or button'd close in lowland vest,
Within his doughty grasp, broad sword, or gun be prest,—
Rememb'ring him, he still maintains
His country's cause on foreign plains,
To grace her name and earn her praise,
Led by the brave of modern days.

CVIII.

Such Abercrombie, fought with thee
On Egypt's dark embattled shore,
And near Corunna's bark-clad sea
With great and gallant Moore.
Such fought with Ferguson and Graham,
A leader worthy of the name,
And fought in pride of Scotland's ancient fame
With firmer nerve and warmer will;
And wheresoe'er on hostile ground,
Or Scot or hardy Celt are found,
Thy spirit, noble Wallace, fighteth still.

CIX.

O Scotland! proud may be thy boast!
Since Time his course thro' circling years hath run,
There hath not shone, in Fame's bright host,
A nobler hero than thy patriot son.

CX.

Manly and most devoted was the love
With which for thee unweariedly he strove;
No selfish lust of power, not ev'n of fame,
Gave ardour to the pure and generous flame.
Rapid in action, terrible in fight,
In counsel wise, inflexible in right,
Was he, who did so oft, in olden days,
Thy humbled head from base oppression raise.
Then be it by thy generous spirit known,
Ready in freedom's cause to bleed,
Spurning corruption's worthless meed.
That in thy heart thou feel'st this hero was thine own.

NOTES.

Note I.

And sunk beneath the Southron's faithless lord
In sullen deep despair. Page 499.

The oppression under which Scotland groaned is thus detailed by Blind Harry, (page 7.)

" When Saxon blood into the realm coming,
Working the will of Edward, that false King,
Many great wrongs they wrought in this region,
Destroyed our Lords and brake their biggins down.
Both wives and widows they took at their own will,
Nuns and maidens whom they lik'd to spill

King Herod's part they played here in Scotland,
On young *children* that they before them fand.
The bishopricks that were of greatest vail
They took in hand of their archbishop's haill;
Not for the Pope they would no kirk forbear,
But gripped all thro' violence of weir.
Glasgow they gave, as it o'erwell was ken'd,
To Diocie of Durham to a commend.
Small benefices then they would pursue,
And for the right full worthy clerks they slew."

The grievous thraldom which Scotland endured after the rights of Baliol had been set aside by Edward, is thus recorded by Barbour:

"To Scotland went he (Edward) then in hy
And all the land gan occupy:
Sa hale that both castell and toune
Was into his possessioune
Fra Weik anent Orkenay
To Muller Suwk in Galloway;
And stuffet all with Inglissmen.
Schyrreffys then and bailyheys made he then,
And alkyn other officeries,
That for to govern land afferis,
He maid of Inglis nation;
That worthyt than sa rych fellone,
And sa wyckkyt and cowatouss,
And sa hawtene and dispitouss
That Scottis men mycht do na thing
That enir mycht pleyss to their liking.
* * * * * * * * * * *
And gyff that ony man thaim by
Had ony thing that was worthy,
As horse or hund, or other thing,
That was pleasand to thar liking,
With rycht or wrang it have wald thai,
And gyff ony man wald them withsay,
Thai sald swa do that thai suld tyne
Other land or lyff or leyff in pyne."

After expatiating further on the miserable condition of the Scotch, he breaks forth in a more impassioned strain than is often to be met with in the sober bards of those olden times.

"A! freedome is a noble thing!
Freedome mays man to haiff liking;
Freedome all solace to man giffis;
He levys at ess that frely levys!
A noble heart may haiff nane ess,
Na ellys nocht that may him pless,
Gyff freedome faily he: for fre liking
Is yharnyt our all other thing.
Na he that ay has levyt fre,
May nocht knaw weil the propyrte
The anger, na the wrechyt dome
That is cowplyt to foule thyrldome.
Bot gyff he had assayet it,
Than all perquer he suld it wyt;
And suld think freedome mar to pryss
Than all the gold in warld that is."

NOTE II.

Existed worth without alloy,
In form a man, in years a boy. P. 499.

Blind Harry, page 7.

"William Wallace, ere he was man of arms,
Great pity thought that Scotland took sik harms.
Meikle dolour it did him in his mind,
For he was wise, right worthy, wight and kind.
* * * * * * * * * * * * ..
Into his heart he had full meikle care.
He saw the Southerons multiply mare and mare,
And to himself would often make his mone.
Of his good kin they had slain many one.
Yet he was then seemly, stark, and bold,
And he of age was but eighteen years old."

NOTE III.

'Tis pleasant in his early frolick feats
Which fond tradition long and oft repeats,
The op'ning of some dauntless soul to trace,
Whose bright career of fame a country's annals grace. P. 500.

Many of the early feats of Wallace are told by the Blind Bard very minutely, and sometimes with a degree of humour; as for instance, his slaying the constable's son of Dundee, told thus:—

"Upon a day to Dundee he was send,
Of cruelness full little they him kend.
The constable, a fellon man of weir,
That to the Scotts oft did full meikle deir,
Selbie, he hegbt, dispiteful and outrage,
A son he had near twenty years of age:
Into the town he used every day,
Three men or four there went with him to play.
An hely shrew, wanton in his intent,
Wallace he saw and towards him he went;
Likely he was right big and well beseem
Into a weed of goodly ganand green;
He call'd on him and said, thou Scot, abide,
What devil thee graiths in so gay a weed?
An Irish mantle is was thy kind to wear,
A Scots whittle under thy belt to bear,
Rough rulzions upon thy harlot feet,
Give me thy knife; what doth thy gear so meet?
To him he went, his knife to take him fra.
Fast by the collar Wallace can him ta,
Under his hand the knife he braideth out,
For all his men that 'sembled him about.
But help himself he knew of no remead,
Without rescue, he sticked him to dead.
The squire fell, of him there was no more,
His men followed on Wallace wonder sore.
The press was thick, and cumber'd them full fast,
Wallace was speedy, and greatly als agast;
The bloody knife bare drawn in his hand,
He spared none that he before him fand.
The house he knew his ome lodged in,
Thither he fled, for out he might not win.
The good-wife there, within the close saw he,
And help, he cried, for him that died on tree,
The young captain has fallen with me at strife.
In at the door he went with this good-wife
A russet gown of her own she him gave
Upon his weed that cover'd all the lave;

A sudden courch o'er neck and head let fall,
A woven white hat she braced on withall;
For they should not tarry long at that inn,
Gave him a rock, syne set him down to spin.
The Southron sought where Wallace was in dread,
They knew not well at what gate in he yeed.
In that same house they sought him busily,
But he sat still and span right cunningly,
As of his time he had not learned lang.
They left him so, and forth their gates can gang
With heavy chear and sorrowful of thought,
Mair wit of him as then get could they nought."

Note IV.

As angler in the pooly wave. P. 500.

Reduced, as he frequently was, to live in hiding, this would often be his means of providing food, though the following passage relates apparently to times of less necessity, when Wallace, attended only by a child, having gone to fish in the river of Irvine, met the attendants of Lord Piercy, who then commanded at Air. They rudely asking him to give them some of his fish, and not content with a part, which he had desired the child who carried the basket, to give them, but insolently demanding the whole, and, on his refusal, attacking him with the sword, it is said,—

"Wallace was woe he had no weapons there,
But the pont-staff, the which in hand he bare.
Wallace with it fast on the cheek him took
With so good-will that while off his feet he shook.
The sword flew from him a fur-broad on the land.
Wallace was glad, and hint it soon in hand,
And with the sword an awkward stroke him gave
Under his head, the craig in sunder rave.
By that the rest lighted about Wallace,
He had no help, but only God his grace.
On either side full fast on him they dang,
Great peril was if that had lasted lang.
Upon the head in great ire struck he one,
The shearing blade glaid to the collar-bone.
Another on the arm he hit so hardily,
While hand and sword both on the field can lie.
The other two fled to their house again;
He sticketh him that last was on the plain.
Three slew he there, two fled with all their might
After their lord, but he was out of sight."

Note V.

How the base Southron's arm a woman slew,
And robbed him of his wedded mate. P. 500.

From the same authority we have the following account of his love, which is somewhat curious.

Page 96.

"In Lanerk dwelt a gentlewoman there,
A maiden mild, as my book will declare,
Eighteen years old or little more of age,
Als born she was to part of heritage.
Her father was of worship and renown,
And Hew Braidfoot he hight, of Laming toun,
As feil others in the country were call'd,
Before time they gentlemen were of all'd.
But this good man and als his wife was dead,
The maiden then wist of no other rede,
But still she dwelt in tribute in the town
And purchased had King Edward's protection;
Servants with her and friends at her own will,
Thus lived she without desire of ill;
A quiet house as she might hald in wear,
For Hesilrig had done her meikle dear,
Slain her brother, which eldest was and heir.
All suffered she and right lowly her bare,
Amiable, so benign, ware and wise,
Courteous and sweet, fulfilled of gentrice.
Well ruled of tongue, hail of countenance,
Of virtues she was worthy to advance,
Humbly she held and purchased a good name,
Of ilka wight she keeped her from blame,
True right wise folk a great favour she lent.
Upon a day to kirk as she went,
Wallace her saw as he his eyes can cast,
The print of love, him punced at the last,
So asperly thro' beauty of that bright,
With great unease in presence bide he might.'

I hope I may be permitted to give a specimen of the ornamented passages of the Blind Bard's poem, which contains but very few of that character.

"Into April when closed is but ween
The able ground by working of nature,
And woods have won their worthy weeds of green,
When Nympheus in building of his bour
With oyl and balm, fulfilled of sweet odour,
Fumous matters as they are wont to gang,
Walking their course in every casual hour,
To glad the hunter with his merry sang."

I am tempted also to give a specimen of the more empassioned or declamatory parts, which are likewise very thinly scattered through the work. Speaking of Wallace, who was obliged to leave his new-married love, he exclaims,—

"Now leave thy mirth, now leave thy haill pleasance,
Now leave thy bliss, now leave thy childish age,
Now leave thy youth, now follow thy hard chance,
Now leave thy ease, now leave thy marriage,
Now leave thy love, or thou shalt lose a gage
Which never on earth shall be redeemed again;
Follow fortune and all her fierce outrage,
Go live in war, go live in cruel pain."

The death of Wallace's wife is thus related in a plainer and less studied manner. After having told how the English, who were in possession of Lanerk, quarrelled with Wallace and his friend, Sir John Graham, on their way from church, scoffed at them for being so well dressed; and how, after coming

to blows, and the two friends slaying several of them, they were overpowered by numbers, and gained with difficulty the house of Wallace's wife,—he proceeds,

"The woman then which was full will of wane,
The peril saw with fellon noise and din.
Set up the gate and let them enter in.
Thro' to a strength they passed off that stead.
Fifty Southron upon the gate were dead.
This fair woman did business in her might,
The Englishmen to tarry with a slight,
While that Wallace into the woods was past,
Then Cartlan Crags they pursued fast.
When Southron saw that scaped was Wallace,
Again they turn'd, the woman took on case,
Put her to death, I cannot tell you how,
Of sik matter I may not tarry now."

NOTE VI.

His countrymen, with faithless gaze,
Beheld his valour's early blaze. P. 500.

Wintown, in his chronicle, after telling how Wallace surrounded the sherrif of Lanerk in the town at his inn, and slew him; the conclusion of which story runs thus:
Page 95.

"The schyrrave by the throt he gat,
And that hey stayre he hurlyd him down
And slew him there wythin the town,"

proceeds to say,

Fray he thus the scherrave slwe,
Scottis men fast to him drew,
That with the Inglis oft tyme ware,
Aggrevyd and supprised sare."

Holinshed, in his Chronicles, mentions him thus:—

"In that season also the fame of William Wallace began to spring, a young gentleman of huge stature and notable strength of bodi with such skill and knowledge of warlike enterprises, and hereto of such hardinesse of stomach, in attempting all manner of dangerous exploits, that his match was not any where lightlie to be found. He was son to one Sir Andrew Wallace of Craigie, and from his youth bore ever an inward hatred against the English nation. Sundrie notable feats he wrought also against the Englishmen in defence of the Scots, and was of such incredible force at his coming to perfect age, that of himselfe alone, without all helpe, he would not feare to set on three or four Englishmen and vanquish them. When the fame, therefore, of his worthie acts was notified through the realme, manie were put in good hope that by his means the realme should be delivered from the servitude of the Englishmen within short time after. And hereupon a great number of the Scotch nation, as well of the nobilitie as others, were readie to assist him in al his enterprises. By reason thereof he migh not easilie be entrapped, or taken of the Englishmen, that went about to have gotten him into their hands."

Buchanan, in his history of Scotland, after mentioning the imprisonment of Baliol, and Edward's sailing to France, where he was then carrying on war, and Cumin, Earl of Buchan, taking advantage of his absence, to ravage Northumberland, and lay siege to Carlisle, continues, "Though this expedition did somewhat to encourage the before crest-fallen Scotch, and hinder the English from doing them further mischief, yet it contributed little or nothing to the main chance, in regard that all the places of strength were possessed by the enemy's garrisons; but when the nobility had neither strength nor courage to undertake great matters, there presently started up one William Wallace, a man of an ancient noble family, but one that had lived poorly and meanly, as having little or no estate; yet this man performed in this war, not only beyond the expectation, but even the belief of all the common people; for he was bold of spirit, and strong of body; and when he was but a youth, had slain a young English nobleman, who proudly domineered over him. For this fact he was forced to run away, and to skulk up and down in several places for some years to save his life, and by this course of living, his body was hardened against wind and weather, and his mind was likewise fortified to undergo greater hazards when time should serve. At length, growing weary of such a wandering unsettled way of living, he resolved to attempt something, though never so hazardous, and therefore gathered a band of men together of like fortune with himself, and did not only assault single persons, but even greater companies, though with an inferior number, and accordingly, slew several persons in divers places. He played his pranks with as much dispatch as boldness, and never gave his enemy any advantage to fight him; so that, in short time, his fame was spread over both nations, by which means many came in to him, moved by the likeness of their cause, or with like love of their country; thus he made up a considerable army. And seeing the nobles were sluggish in their management of affairs, either out of fear or dulness, this Wallace was proclaimed Regent by the tumultuous band that followed him, and so he managed things as a lawful magistrate, and the substitute of Baliol. He accepted of this name, not out of any ambition or desire to rule, but because it was a title given him by his countrymen out of pure love and goodwill. The first remarkable exploit he performed with his army was near Lanerick, where he slew the major-general of that precinct, being an Englishman of good descent. Afterwards he took and demolished many castles, which were either slenderly fortified or meanly garrisoned, or else guarded negligently; which petty attempts so encouraged his soldiers, that they shunned no service, no, not the most hazardous, under his conduct, as having experienced that his boldness was

guided by counsel, and that his counsel was seconded by success."

Note VII.

What tho' those warriors, gleaming round,
On peaceful death-bed never lay,
But each, upon his fated day,
His end on field or scaffold found.—P. 501.

That the greater part of those brave men died in the field I need scarcely maintain; and Barbour, in his Bruce, says, "that after the battle of Methven, the Scotch prisoners of distinction were kept till Edward's pleasure respecting them should be known, who ordered those who would not swear fealty to him, and abandon the cause of Bruce, to be executed. Of the five names which he particularly mentions, two, viz. Frazer and Hay, are found amongst Wallace's first associates; to which he adds, 'and other ma.'"

"Sir Thomas Randall there was taen,
That was a young bacheler."

Then, further on,

"Thomas Randall was one of tha,
That for his lyff become their man.
Off othyr that were takyn than,
Sum they ransowet, sum thai slew.
And sum thai hangyt, and sum thai drew."

Randall, who is the only person amongst them, noticed as proving unfaithful to Bruce, and as a young man, we may infer that the others were more advanced in years, and might, therefore, many of them, be the early companions of Wallace, who was himself only five and forty when he died.

Note VIII.

Ent'ring the fatal Barns, fair sight!
Went one by one the manly train,
But neither baron, laird, nor knight
Did e'er return again.—P. 501.

In Blind Harry, book 7th, the account of this wicked massacre is thus given:—

"A baulk [beam] was knit all full of ropes so keen
Sick a Tolbooth sensyn was never seen.
Stern men were set the entry for to hold,
None might pass in but ay as they were call'd.
Sir Ranald [the uncle of Wallace] first to make fewty for his land,
The knight went in and would no longer stand;
A running cord they slipt over his head
Hard to the baulk and hanged him to dead.
Sir Brice the Blair then with his ome in past
Unto the dead they hasted him full fast,
By [by the time] he enter'd, his head was in the snare,
Tied to the baulk, hanged to the dead right there.
The third enter'd that pity was for thy,
A worthy knight, Sir Neal Montgomery,
And other feil [many] of landed men about,
Many yeed in, but no Scotsman came out."

Proceeding with the story, he says,—

"Thus eighteen score to that derf death they dight,
Of barons bold, and many a worthy knight."

Dr. Jamieson, in his ingenious and learned Notes to the Life of Wallace, by Harry the Minstrel, so satisfactorily confutes the doubts of Lord Hailes, respecting the authenticity of this event, that there is no occasion for me to say any thing on the subject. A transaction so atrocious as the hanging so many men of distinction, and getting them into the snare on pretence of a public meeting on national business, might be fictitious in a poem written many ages after the date of the supposed event; but when found in a metrical history by a simple bard, so near that period, and supported by the universal tradition of the country, one must be sceptical to a degree which would make the relation of old events absolutely spiritless and unprofitable, to reject it. It might be called the imbecility of scepticism. This would be sufficient to establish it, even independent of the proof drawn from Barbour, and other old writers, which Dr. Jamieson has produced. I recommend it to the reader to see the above mentioned notes, page 401., for the answer given by Dr. Jamieson to another objection of Sir D. Dalrymple, respecting the authenticity of Monteith's treachery to Wallace.

Note IX.

That form is Wallace wight.—P. 502.

Miss Porter, in her interesting novel of the Scottish Chiefs, gives the following powerful description of her hero, at the Barns of Ayr, from which it is probable I have borrowed somewhat, though at the time scarcely aware to whom I was obliged; for, as Harry the Minstrel has made the ghost of Fadon appear upon the battlements of the Castle, with a "prodigious rafter in his hand," that might also impress me with the idea. After telling what great piles of combustibles were, by the orders of Wallace, heaped up on the outside of the building, she adds,—

"When all was ready, Wallace, with the mighty spirit of retribution, nerved every limb, mounted to the roof, and tearing off part of the tiling, with a flaming brand in his hand, shewed himself glittering in arms to the [affrighted revellers beneath, and as he threw it blazing amongst them, he cried aloud, 'The blood of the murdered calls for vengeance, and it comes.' At that instant the matches were put to the faggots which surrounded the building, and the whole party, springing from their seats, hastened towards the doors: all were fastened, and, retreating again in the midst of the room, they fearfully looked up to the tremendous figure above, which, like a supernatural being, seemed to avenge their crimes, and rain down fire on their guilty heads. * * * The rising smoke from within and without the building, now obscured his terrific form. The shouts of the Scots, as the fire covered its walls, and the streaming

flames licking the windows, and pouring into every opening of the building, raised such a terror in the breasts of the wretches within, that with the most horrible cries they again and again flew to the doors to escape. Not an avenue appeared; almost suffocated with smoke, and scorched with the blazing rafters that fell from the roof, they at last made a desperate attempt to break a passage through the great portal."

Though I have made a larger extract from this able and popular writer, than is necessary for my purpose, the terrific sublimity of the passage, which has tempted me to transgress, will also procure my pardon.

Note X.

O'er Stirling's towers his standard plays,
Lorn owns his rule, Argyle obeys.
In Angus, Merns, and Aberdeen,
Nor English Lord nor Cerf is seen.—P. 502.

Holinshed, after telling how Wallace received the army that John Cumin, Earl of Buchan, led before, and constrained those Scots that favoured King Edward to renounce all faith and promises made to him, says, "This done, he passed forth with great puissance against the Englishmen that held sundrie castels within Scotland, and with great hardinesse and manhood he wan the castels of Forfair, Dundee, Brechen, and Montrose, sleaing all such soldiers as he found within them. Wallace, now joiful of his prosperous successe, and hearing, that certeine of the chiefest officers of those Englishmen that kept the castle of Dunster, were gone forth to consult of other Englishmen of the forts next to them adjoining, came suddenlie to the said castel, and took it, not leaving a man alive of all those whom he found as then within it: then, after he had furnished the hold with his own souldiers in all defensible wise, he went to Aberdeen," &c. *Holinshed's Chronicles.*

Buchanan says, "When these things were spread abroad, (the fame of Wallace's exploits,) and, perhaps, somewhat enlarged beyond the truth, out of men's respect and favour to him, all that wished well to their country, or were afraid of their own particular conditions, flocked to him, as judging it fit to take opportunity by the forelock; so that, in a short time, he reduced all the castles which the English held on the other side of the Forth, though well fortified, and more carefully guarded for fear of his attacks. He took and demolished the castles of Dundee and Forfar, Brechin and Montrose. He seized on Dunster by surprise, and garrisoned it: he entered Aberdeen (which the enemy, for fear of his coming, had plundered and burnt) even whilst it was in flames; but a rumour being scattered abroad, concerning the coming of the English army, prevented his taking the castle; for he determined to meet them at the Forth, not being willing to hazard a battle, but in a place which he himself should pitch upon." *Buch. Hist. of Scotland.*

Note XI.

For news are brought of English host
Which fast approaching thro' the land
At Stirling mean to make their stand.—P. 502.

Holinshed's Chronicles:—"But now being advertised of the coming of this armie against him, he (Wallace) raised his siege, and went to Striveling to defend the bridge there, that Hugh Cressingham with his army should not passe the same, according, as the report went, his intent was to doe. Heere, incountring with the enemies, the third ides of September, he obtained a very worthie victorie; for he slew not onlie the foresaid Cressingham, with a great part of his armie, being passed the river, but also forced the residue to flee in such sort, that a great number of them were drowned, and few escaped awai with life. Thus having gotten the upper hand of his enemies, here at Striveling, he returned again to the siege of Cowper, which, shortly after, upon his return thither, was rendered unto him by those that were within its garrison."

Buchanan's History of Scotland:—"But he (King Edward) hearing of the exploits of Wallace, thought there was need of a greater force to suppress him; yet, that the expedition was not worthy of a King neither (as being only against a roving thief, for so the English called Wallace,) and therefore, he writes to Henry Piercy, Earl of Northumberland, and William Latimer, 'that they should speedily levy what forces they could out of neighbouring parts, and join themselves with Cressingham, who as yet remained in Scotland, to subdue the rebellious Scots.' Thomas Walsingham writes, 'that the Earl of Warren was general in this expedition. But Wallace, who was then besieging the castle of Cowper, in Fife, lest his army, which he had increased against the approach of the English, should be idle; the English being near at hand, marched directly to Stirling. The river Forth, no where almost fordable, may there be passed over by a bridge of wood, though it be increased by other rivers and the coming in of the tide. There Cressingham passed over with the greatest part of his army, but the bridge, either having its beams loosened or disjointed on purpose, by the skill of the architect, (as our writers say,) that so it might not be able to bear any great weight, or else being overladen with the burden of so many horse and foot, and carriages, as passed over, was broken, and so the march of the rest of the English was obstructed: the Scots set upon those who were passed over, before they could put themselves into a posture of defence; and, having slain their captain, drove the rest back into the river: the slaughter was so great, that they were almost all either killed or drowned. Wallace returned from this fight to the besieging of castles; and, in a short time, he so changed the face of affairs, that he left none of the English in Scotland, but such as were made

prisoners. This victory, wherein none of distinction amongst the Scots fell, (save Andrew Murray, whose son some years after was regent of Scotland,) was obtained on the 13th of September, in the year of Christ 1297. Some say that Wallace was called off to this fight, not from the siege of Cowper, but Dundee, whither he returned after the fight. So John Major, and some books found in monasteries, do relate.' "

Note XII.

Then many a high-plum'd gallant rear'd his head,
And proudly smote the ground with firmer tread,
Who did, ere close of evening, lye
With ghastly face turn'd to the sky.—P. 503.

How often has the contrast of the field before a battle, and at the conclusion of the bloody day, been noticed by poets! And there is one passage from a most spirited and beautiful poem on my present subject, which I must beg leave to transcribe. Had not the plan of my Legend been so totally different, I should never have presumed to enter upon ground which had already been so ably occupied. The poet, addressing the moon, as on the night before the fight of Falkirk, says,—

" Why thou, fair orb, dost thou shine so bright
As thou rollest on thy way!
Canst thou not hide thy silver light
That the heavens, all dark with the clouds of night,
Might frown on yon fierce array!
But why should'st thou hide thy shining brow,
Thou who look'st through the midnight sky!
Tho' the dæmon who gives the world for woe
Bids the tear descend and the life-blood flow,
Thy place shall be still on high!
Thou look'st on man,—thou see'st him blest
In the light of his little day,—
Thou look'st anon, he is gone to rest!
The cold worm creeps in his lordly breast,
He sleeps in the grave's decay!
Thou saw'st him rise,—thou shalt see him fall,
Thou shalt stay till the tomb hath cover'd all;
Till death has crush'd them one by one,
Each frail but proud ephemeron!
To-morrow thy cold and tranquil eye
Shall gaze again from the midnight sky;
With unquenched light, with ray serene,
Thou shalt glance on the field where death hath been;
Thou shalt gild his features pale and wan,
Thou shalt gaze on the form of murder'd man,
On his broken armour scatter'd round,
On the sever'd limb and yawning wound;
But thou, amidst the wreck of time,
Unfrowning passest on, and keep'st thy path sublime."

Miss Holford's Wallace, Cant. II.

Note XIII.

Who did not spare their mother's sons that day,
And ne'er shall be forgot.—P. 504.

These words are nearly taken from an old song called *Auld lang syne*:—

" Sir John the Grame of lasting fame
Shall never be forgot;
He was an honour to the name,
A brave and valiant Scot.
The Douglas and the great Montrose
Were heroes in their time;
These men spar'd not their mothers' sons
For Auld lang syne."

Note XIV.

And he with foresight wise, to spare
Poor Scotland, scourged, exhausted, bare.—P. 505.

Buchanan's history:—" By means of these combustions, the fields lay untilled, insomuch that, after that overthrow, a famine ensued, and a pestilence after the famine. From whence a greater destruction was apprehended than from the war: Wallace, to prevent this misfortune as much as he could, called together all those who were fit for service, to appear at a certain day, with whom he marched into England, thinking, with himself, that their bodies being exercised with labour, would be more healthy, and that wintering in the enemy's country, provisions would be spared at home; and the soldiers, who were in much want, might reap some fruit of their labours in a rich country, and flourishing by reason of its continued peace. When he was entered into England, no man dared to attack him, so that he stayed there from the first of November to the first of February; and having refreshed and enriched his soldiers with the fruits and spoils of the enemy, he returned home with great renown. This expedition, as it increased the fame and authority of Wallace amongst the vulgar, so it heightened the envy of the nobles," &c. &c.

Holinshed also mentions Wallace's stay in England with his army.

Note XV.

Edward meantime asham'd and wroth
At such unseemly foil, and loth
So to be bearded, sent defiance
To Scotland's Chief.—P. 505.

Buchanan's history:—" Moreover, the King of England, finding the business greater than could be managed by his deputies, made some settlement of things in France, and returned home, and gathering together a great army, but hastily levied, (for he brought not back his veteran soldiers from beyond sea,) and for the most part raw and inexperienced men, he marches toward Scotland, supposing he had only to do with a disorderly band of robbers. But when he saw both armies in battle array, about five hundred paces from each other, in the plains of Stanmore, he admired the discipline, order, and confidence of his enemies. So that, though he himself had much greater force, yet he durst not put it to the hazard of a battle against such a veteran and so experi-

enced a Captain, and against soldiers enured to all hardships, and marched slowly back. Wallace, on the other hand, durst not follow him, for fear of ambuscades," &c. &c.

Holinshed, who so often shews himself very inimical to the Scotch, gives an account of the meeting of the Scotch and English, on Stanmore, more favourable to the former than Buchanan:—

'He (Wallace) entered into England at the time before appointed, where King Edward was readie with an armie, upon Stanemoore, double in number to the Scots, to give them battell; but when the time came that both were readie to have joined, the Englishmen withdrew, having no lust (as it should seem) to fight with the Scots at that time; who perceiving them to give backe, incontinentilie would have rushed foorth of their ranks to have pursued in chase after them, but Wallace, doubting least the Englishmen had ment some policie, and saying that it was enough for him that he had forced such a great Prince, in his own country, to forsake the field, caused the Scots to keep together in order of battell; and so, preserving them from the malice of their enemies, brought them into Scotland with lives and honours saved, besides the infinit spoiles and booties which they got in their jornie." *Holinshed's Chronicles.*

Note XVI.

And they upon the ocean met,
With warlike fleet, and sails full set,
De Longoville, that bold outlaw.—P. 506.

Though, I believe, there is little mention made in history of Wallace's actions in France, yet his being engaged in the wars against the English in that country, is highly probable, because a contemporary writer of his life would not venture to advance it, if it were untrue; and those French wars are transmitted to posterity by French writers, who would not willingly give much credit to warriors of another nation; or by English, who would be as little inclined to mention the prowess of the Scotch, when listed under the banners of another kingdom. But so romantic a story as that of De Longoville on the high seas, might, perhaps, though entirely fanciful, expect to pass with impunity. However, since De Longoville is afterwards frequently mentioned as a stanch adherent of our hero, and also as fighting under Robert Bruce, and cannot therefore be supposed to be an imaginary personage, some credit is due to the account given of their first rencounter, and the generous beginning of their friendship.

Note XVII.

But envy of a Hero's fame
Which so obscured each lofty name.—P. 507.

Buchanan on this subject says:—"Having thus got a victory, though bloodless, (at Stanmore,) against so puissant a King, his enemies were so much the more enraged against him, and caused rumour to be scattered up and down, that Wallace did openly affect a supreme or tyrannical power, which the nobles, especially Bruce and the Cumins of the royal stock, took in mighty disdain. * * * And therefore they determined by all means to undermine the authority of Wallace. Edward was not ignorant of these disgusts, and therefore the next summer he levies a great army, consisting partly of English, partly of Scots, who had remained faithful to him, and came to Falkirk, which is a village, built in the very track of the wall of Severus, and is distant from Stirling little more than six miles. The Scot's army were not far from them, of sufficient strength, for they were thirty thousand, if the generals and leaders had agreed amongst themselves: their generals were, John Cumin, John Stuart, and William Wallace, the most flourishing persons amongst the Scots; the two former for their high descent and opulency; the latter for the glory of his former exploits.

"When the army, in three squadrons, was ready to fight, a new dispute arose, besides their former envy, who should lead the van of the army; and when all three stood upon their terms, the English decided the controversy, who, with banners displayed, marched with a swift pace towards them. Cumin and his forces retreated without striking a stroke; Stuart being beset before and behind, was slain, with all that followed him: Wallace was sorely pressed upon in the front, and Bruce had fetched a compass about a hill, and fell on his rear; yet he was as little disturbed as, in such circumstances, he could possibly be, but retreated beyond the River Carron, where, by the interposition of the river, he had got an opportunity to defend himself, and also to gather up the straggling fugitives; and Bruce, desirous to speak with him, he agreed to it. They two stood over against one to another where the river hath the narrowest channel and the highest banks. * * * * This battle was fought on the 22d of July, when there fell of the Scots above ten thousand, of whom, of the nobles, were, John Stuart, Macduff, Earl of Fife, and of Wallace his army, John Greme, the most valiant person of the Scots, next to Wallace himself."

Holinshed likewise mentions the envy and jealous hatred which many of the nobles particularly Cumin, conceived against Wallace, as a man of comparatively mean origin, and their entering into a league with Edward to betray him. He notices the dispute between Wallace and Stuart about leading the van, at the battle of Falkirk, and Cumin and his followers quitting the field as the armies were about to join battle, and the great slaughter made of the Scots by Bruce; but he adds: "Yet Wallace left nothing undone that might perteine to the duty of a valiant capteine. But at length all his endeavours, notwithstanding the Scots (overcome with multitude of numbers, as the Scottish writers say,) were

sleine in such huge numbers that he was constreined to draw out of the field with such small remnant as were left alive."

He then relates the meeting between him and Bruce, on the banks of the Carron.

Note XVIII.

With flashing eye and dark red brow
He utter'd then a hasty vow.—P. 507.

That Wallace withdrew from the field, in the bitterness of his resentment for the ingratitude of the nobles and the insults he received, binding himself by a rash vow from taking any part in the combat, is not mentioned, I believe, by any general historian or chronicler; but as it is stated so circumstantially by Harry the Minstrel, who professes to take the matter of his poem so scrupulously from the life of Wallace, written by his friend and contemporary Blair, and being the only shade cast upon the public virtue of our hero, which a friend would willingly (but for the love of truth) have omitted, I must consider it as authentic. The private visit received by him from Edward's Queen while in England, and other matters, tending to add to the glory of his friend and hero, are of a more doubtful character, and have not therefore been admitted into this legend.

Note XIX.

But from the ground
They like th' enchafed lion bound.
Rage is their sorrow, grimly fed,
And blood the tears they shed.—P. 508.

Blind Harry, page 328.—

" When Wallace saw this knight [Grame] to dead was brought
The piteous pain so sore thrill'd in his thought;
All out of kind it alter'd his courage,
His wit in war was then but a wood rage.
His horse him bore in field where so him list,
For of himself as then little he wist;
Like a wild beast that were from reason rent,
As witlessly into the host he went;
Dinging on hard; what Southeron he right hit
Straight upon horse again might never sit.
Into that rage full feil folk he dang down,
All about him was red a full great room."

Note XX.

The Scottish soldiers, scatter'd wide,
Hath Wallace round his standard drawn,
Hath cheer'd their spirits, rous'd their pride,
And led them where their foes they found
All listless, scatter'd on the ground.—
P. 509.

As we find the English not pursuing this victory, but presently retiring to their own country, whilst Wallace is at liberty to summons a general convention of the states at St. Johnston, it is probable they received some severe check from the arm of that chieftain after the battle, though it is not stated in general history. It is indeed said, that the English retired for fear of an attack from the French in their own country; but as no such attack followed or seemed really to have been intended, it is likely that this was only their excuse for retreating. This opinion is corroborated, too, by the manner in which Holinshed mentions Wallace's resignation of all public authority soon after, at Perth or St. Johnston:—

" But, notwithstanding all these valiant speeches of Wallace, (alluding to his conference with Bruce on the banks of the Carron,) when he considered the unfortunate discomfiture by him so treacherouslie received, he came to Perth, and there uttering, by complaint, the injurious envie of the nobles against him, he renounced and discharged himself of all the authority which had been committed to his hands touching the governance of the realme, and went into France, as saith Lesleus; but Johanus Maior saith, he never came there, though he will not flatlie denie it."

Had Edward, after gaining so great a victory ar Falkirk, received no check, Wallace could not have been in condition to renounce his authority in so high a tone as is here imputed to him by an English author, who certainly cannot be accused of any partiality to the Scotch.

Note XXI.

Retaining in that potent hand
Which thrice redeem'd its native land.—P. 509.

First after the battle of Biggar he freed the country generally from dependence on England, though Edward still held many places of strength in the Scotland; then, after the burning of the Barns of Air, he almost entirely drove his adherents out of it; and thirdly, after the battle of Stirling he completely freed Scotland from the enemy.

Note XXII.

The sound ev'n of his whisper'd name
Revived in faithful hearts the smother'd flame,
And many secretly to join his standard came.
—P. 509.

I have in this part of the story adhered to Blair and the Minstrel, though there is nothing correspondent to it in either Holinshed or Buchanan, except what may be gleaned from the following passages. After his account of the battle of Roslin, fought probably when Wallace was in France, and the succeeding invasion of Edward into Scotland, Holinshed says, " The Scots perceiving they were not of puissance able to resist his invasion, withdrew to their strengths, by means whereof the English army passed through all Scotland, even from the south parts unto the north, and found few or none to make resistance, except Wallace, and such as followed his opinion, who were fled to the mountains and the woods, &c.

Buchanan says, " To blot out the ignominy

(of his defeat at Roslin,) and put an end at once to a long and tedious war, he (Edward) therefore levies an army bigger than ever he had before, and assaulted Scotland both by sea and land, and made spoil of it even unto the uttermost borders of Ross, no man daring to oppose so great a force. Only Wallace and his men, sometimes in the front, sometimes in the rear, sometimes in the flanks, would snap either those that rashly went before or loitered behind, or that in plundering straggled too far from the main body; neither did he suffer them to stray from their colours.

Note XXIII.

Then Edward thought the Chief to gain,
And win him to his princely side
With treasur'd gold and honours vain.—P. 509.

Holinshed's Chronicles:—"It is said that King Edward required by a messenger sent unto this Wallace, that if he would come in and be sworn his liege-man and true subject, he would have at his hands great lordships and possessions within England to mainteine his post, as was requisite to a man of verie honourable estate. But Wallace refused these offers, saieng that he preferred liberty with small revenues in Scotland before anie possession of lands in England, were the same never so great; considering he might not enjoy them under the yoke of bondage. * * * * Furthermore before his (King Edward's) departure out of Scotland, he appointed all the Scottish nobles to assemble at Scone, where he called them to take a new oth, that from henceforth they would take him for their Sovereigne Lord, and to obeie him in all things as loial subjects. All the nobility of Scotland was sworne to him that day, Wallace onlie excepted, who eschued more than the companie of a serpent to have anie thing to doo with the English, touching anie agreement to be made with them, agreeable to their desires."

Buchanan also says, "Edward sought by great promises to bring him over to his party; but his constant tone was, that he devoted his life to his country, to which it was due; and if he could do it no further service, yet he would die in pious endeavours for its defence." He also mentions Wallace's refusing to take the oath of allegiance, taken by all the nobles of Scotland.

Note XXIV.

Monteith, a name which from that day, I ween,
Hateful to every Scottish ear hath been.—P. 510.

Buchanan, after relating the tyrannical use which Edward made of his power, burning the records of Scotland, &c. and the story of Bruce being betrayed by Cumin, &c. &c., says, "About this time also, Wallace was betrayed in the county of Glasgow (where he had hid himself) by his own familiar friend John Monteith, whom the English had corrupted with money, and so was sent to London, where by Edward's commands he was wofully butchered, and his limbs, for the terror of others, hanged up in the most noted places of London and Scotland."

Holinshed says, "About the same time was William Wallace taken at Glasgow, by means of Sir John Monteith and others, in whom he had ever put a most speciall trust; but they being corrupted with the offer of large rewards, promised by King Edward to such as wuld helpe to take him, wrought such fetches, that he was apprehended at last by Odomere de Valence, Earl of Pembroke, who, with a great power of men, brought him to London, where he was put to death, and his quarters sent to Scotland, and set up in sundrie great towns there for a spectacle, as it were, to give example to others."

Note XXV.

Meekly he bow'd o'er bead and book,
And every worldly thought forsook.—P. 510.

The blind Minstrel gives this account of his death, page 398.—

"On Wednesday false Southeron forth him brought
To martyr him, as they before had wrought.
Right sooth it is a Martyr Wallace was,
As Oswald, Edward, Edmund and Thomas.
Of men in arms led him a full great rout.
With a bold spirit, Wallace blinked about.
A Priest he asked for God who died on tree."

Then, after telling how King Edward refused his request, and was rebuked for so doing by an English Bishop, he continues,—

"A sheriff gart his clerk soon from him pass,
Right as they durst, they grant what he would ask.
A psalter book Wallace had on him ever,
From his childhood with it he would not sever;
Better he trowed in viage for to speed,
But then he was dispulzied of his weed.
This grace he ask'd of Lord Clifford, that knight,
To let him have his psalter book in sight;
He gart a Priest it open before him hold,
While they to him had done all that they would.
Steadfast he read for ought they did him thare,
Feil Southerons said that Wallace felt no sare.
Good devotion, so was his beginning,
Continued, therewith, and fair was his ending,
While speech and spirit all at once can fair
To lasting bliss, we trow, for ever mare."

Note XXVI.

In many a castle, town, and plain,
Mountain and forest, still remain
Fondly cherish'd spots which claim,
The proud distinction of his honour'd name.—P. 511

This is too well known to require any confirmation; but I cannot help mentioning the pleasure I lately received in being shown, by two simple country children on the Blantyre Craigs, opposite to Bothwell Castle, (one of those castles which boasts the honour of having a Wallace's tower,) the mark of Wallace's footstep in the rocky brink of a little trickling well.

NOTE XXVII.

Led by the brave of modern d[illegible]
Such, Abercrombie, fought wi[illegible].—P. 511.

I have named our distinguished Scotch leaders only as being naturally connected with the subject. That I have meant no neglect to other brave commanders of these warlike days, when our troops from every part of the United Kingdoms have fought so valiantly and successfully, under the ablest general that has appeared since the time of the great Marlborough, will, I suppose, be readily believed.

NOTE XXVIII.

O Scotland! proud may be thy boast!
Since time his course thro' circling years hath run,
There hath not shone in Fame's bright host,
A nobler hero than thy patriot Son.—P. 511.

Buchanan gives this noble testimony to his worth:—

"Such an end had this person, the most famous man of the age in which he lived, who deserved to be compared to the most renowned captains of ancient times, both for his greatness of mind in undertaking dangers, and for his valour and wisdom in overcoming them. For love to his country, he was second to none; who, when others were slaves, was alone free, neither co[illegible] induced by any rewards or moved by [illegible] to forsake the public cause which he [illegible] once undertaken."

"A thousand thre hundyr and the fyft yhere
Efter the byrth of our Lord dere,
Schyre John of Menteth in tha days
Tak in Glasgow Willame Walays,
And send him in-till Ingland syne,
Thare he was qwateryd and wndwne,
Be dyspyte and hat enwy;
There he tholyd this maryry.
In all Ingland, thare was nought thane
As Willame Walays swa lele a mane.
Quhat he did agayne that natyown
Thai made him provocatyown
Na to them fals nevyr was he,
In fayth full owschype na sawte;
For in his tyme, I hard well say,
That fykkit thai ware, all tyme of fay.'

Wyntown's Chronicle, page 130.

CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS.

Is there a man, that, from some lofty steep,
Views in his wide survey the boundless deep,
When its vast waters, lined with sun and shade,
Wave beyond wave, in seried distance, fade
To the pale sky;—or views it, dimly seen,
The shifting screens of drifted mist between,
As the huge cloud dilates its sable form,
When grandly curtain'd by th' approaching storm,—
Who feels not his aw'd soul with wonder rise
To Him whose power created sea and skies,
Mountains and deserts, giving to the sight
The wonders of the day and of the night?
But let some fleet be seen in warlike pride,
Whose stately ships the restless billows ride,
While each, with lofty masts and bright'ning sheen
Of fair spread sails, moves like a vested Queen;—
Or rather, be some distant bark, astray,
Seen like a pilgrim on his lonely way,
Holding its steady course from port and shore,
A form distinct, a speck, and seen no more,—
How doth the pride, the sympathy, the flame,
Of human feeling stir his thrilling frame!
"O Thou! whose mandate dust inert obey'd!
"What is this creature man whom thou hast made!"

I.

On Palos' shore, whose crowded strand
Bore priests and nobles of the land,
And rustic hinds and townsmen trim,
And harness'd soldiers stern and grim,
And lowly maids and dames of pride,
And infants by their mother's side,—
The boldest seaman stood that e'er
Did bark or ship through tempest steer;
And wise as bold, and good as wise;
The magnet of a thousand eyes,
That on his form and features cast,
His noble mien and simple guise,
In wonder seem'd to look their last.
A form which conscious worth is gracing,
A face where hope, the lines effacing
Of thought and care, bestow'd, in truth,
To the quick eyes' imperfect tracing
The look and air of youth.

II.

Who, in his lofty gait, and high
Expression of th' enlighten'd eye,
Had recognis'd in that bright hour
The disappointed suppliant of dull power,
Who had in vain of states and kings desired
The pittance for his vast emprise required?—
The patient sage, who, by his lamp's faint light,
O'er chart and map spent the long silent night?—
The man who meekly fortune's buffets bore,
Trusting in One alone, whom heaven and earth adore?

III.

Another world's in his mind,
Peopled with creatures of his kind,
With hearts to feel, with minds to soar,
Thoughts to consider and explore;
Souls, who might find, from trespass shriven,
Virtue on earth and joy in heaven!
"That power divine, whom storms obey,"
(Whisper'd his heart,) a leading star,
Will guide him on his blessed way;
Brothers to join by fate divided far.
Vain thoughts! which Heaven doth but ordain
In part to be, the rest, alas! how vain!

IV.

But hath there liv'd of mortal mould,
Whose fortunes with his thoughts could hold
An even race? Earth's greatest son
That e'er earn'd fame, or empire won,
Hath but fulfill'd, within a narrow scope,
A stinted portion of his ample hope.
With heavy sigh and look depress'd,
The greatest men will sometimes hear
The story of their acts address'd
To the young stranger's wond'ring ear,
And check the half-swoln tear.
Is it or modesty or pride
Which may not open praise abide?
No; read his inward thoughts: they tell,
His deeds of fame he prizes well.
But, ah! they in his fancy stand,
As relicks of a blighted band,
Who, lost to man's approving sight,
Have perish'd in the gloom of night,
Ere yet the glorious light of day
Had glitter'd on their bright array.
His mightiest feat had once another,
Of high imagination born,—
A loftier and a nobler brother,
From dear existence torn;
And she for those, who are not, steeps
Her soul in woe,—like Rachel, weeps.

V.

The signal given, with hasty strides
The sailors climb'd their ships' dark sides;
Their anchors weigh'd; and from the shore
Each stately vessel slowly bore.
High o'er the deeply shadow'd flood,
Upon his deck their leader stood,
And turn'd him to the parted land,
And bow'd his head and waved his hand.
And then, along the crowded strand,
A sound of many sounds combin'd,
That wax'd and wan'd upon the wind,
Burst like heaven's thunder, deep and grand:
A lengthen'd peal, which paused, and then

Renew'd, like that which loathly parts,
Oft on the ear return'd again,
The impulse of a thousand hearts.
But as the lengthen'd shouts subside,
Distincter accents strike the ear,
Wafting across the current wide,
Heart-utter'd words of parting cheer:
" Oh ! shall we ever see again
" Those gallant souls re-cross the main?
" God keep the brave ! God be their guide !
" God bear them safe thro' storm and tide !
" Their sails with fav'ring breezes swell !
" O brave Columbus ! fare thee well ! "

VI.

From shore and strait, and gulph and bay,
The vessels held their daring way,
Left far behind, in distance thrown,
All land to Moor or Christian known,
Left far behind the misty isle,
Whose fitful shroud, withdrawn the while,
Shews wood and hill and headland bright
To later seamen's wond'ring sight,
And tide and sea left far behind
That e'er bore freight of human kind;
Where ship or bark to shifting gales,
E'er tack'd their course or spread their sails.
Around them lay a boundless main
In which to hold their silent reign;
But for the passing current's flow,
And cleft waves, brawling round the prow,
They might have thought some magic spell
Had bound them, weary fate! forever there to dwell.

VII.

What did this trackless waste supply,
To soothe the mind or please the eye?
The rising morn thro' dim mist breaking,
The flicker'd east with purple streaking;
The mid-day cloud thro' thin air flying,
With deeper blue the blue sea dying;
Long ridgy waves their white mains rearing,
And in the broad gleam disappearing;
The broaden'd blazing sun declining,
And western waves like fire-flood shining;
The sky's vast dome to darkness given,
And all the glorious host of heaven.

VIII.

Full oft upon the deck, while other's slept,
To mark the bearing of each well-known star
That shone aloft, or on th' horizon far,
The anxious Chief his lonely vigil kept;
The mournful wind, the hoarse wave breaking near,
The breathing groans of sleep, the plunging lead,
The steer's man's call, and his own stilly tread,
Are all the sounds of night that reach his ear.
His darker form stalk'd through the sable gloom
With gestures discomposed and features keen,
That might not in the face of day be seen,
Like some unblessed spirit from the tomb.
Night after night, and day succeeding day,
So pass'd their dull, unvaried time away;
Till Hope, the seaman's worship'd queen, had flown
From every valiant heart but his alone;
Where still, by day, enthron'd, she held her state
With sunny look and brow elate.

IX.

But soon his dauntless soul, which nought could bend,
Nor hope delay'd, nor adverse fate subdue,
With more redoubled danger must contend
Than storm or wave—a fierce and angry crew.
" Dearly," say they, " may we those visions rue
" Which lured us from our native land,
" A wretched, lost, devoted band,
" Led on by hope's delusive gleam,
" The victims of a madman's dream!
" Nor gold shall e'er be ours, nor fame;
" Not ev'n the remnant of a name,
" On some rude-letter'd stone to tell
" On what strange coast our wreck befell.
" For us no requiem shall be sung,
" Nor prayer be said, nor passing knell
" In holy church be rung."

X.

To thoughts like these, all forms give way
Of duty to a leader's sway;
All habits of respect, that bind
With easy tie the human mind.
Ev'n love and admiration throw
Their nobler bands aside, nor show
A gentler mien; relations, friends,
Glare on him now like angry fiends;
And, as he moves, ah, wretched cheer!
Their mutter'd curses reach his ear:
But all undaunted, firm and sage,
He scorns their threats, yet thus he soothes their rage:
" I brought you from your native shore
" An unknown ocean to explore.
" I brought you, partners, by my side,
" Want, toil, and danger, to abide.
" Yet weary stillness hath so soon subdued
" The buoyant soul, the heart of pride,
" Men who in battle's brunt full oft have firmly stood.
" That to some nearing coast we bear,
" How many cheering signs declare!
" Way-faring birds the blue air ranging,
" Their shadowy line to blue air changing,
" Pass o'er our heads in frequent flocks;
" While sea-weed from the parent rocks
" With fibry roots, but newly torn
" In tressy length'en'd wreaths are on the clear wave borne.
" Nay, has not ev'n the drifting current brought
" Things of rude art,—of human cunning wrought?
" Be yet two days your patience tried,
" And if no shore is then descried,
" Ev'n turn your dastard prows again,
" And cast your leader to the main."

XI.

And thus awhile with steady hand
He kept in check a wayward band,
Who but with half-express'd disdain
Their rebel spirit could restrain.
The vet'ran rough as war-worn steel,
Oft spurn'd the deck with grating heel;
The seaman, bending o'er the flood,
With stony gaze all listless stood;
The sturdy bandit, wildly rude,
Sung, as he strode, some garbled strain,
Expressive of each fitful mood,
Timed by his fetter's jangling chain
The proud Castilian, boasted name!
Child of an ancient race
Which proudly priz'd its spotless fame,
And deem'd all fear disgrace,
Felt quench'd within him honour's generous flame,
And in his gather'd mantle wrapp'd his face.

XII.

So pass'd the day, the night, the second day
With its red setting sun's extinguish'd ray.
Dark, solemn midnight coped the ocean wide,
When from his watchful stand Columbus cried,
"A light, a light!"—blest sounds that rung
In every ear.—At once they sprung
With haste aloft, and, peering bright,
Descried afar the blessed sight.
"It moves, it slowly moves like ray
"Of torch that guides some wand'rer's way!
"And other lights more distant; seeming
"As if from town or hamlet streaming!
"'Tis land, 'tis peopled land; man dwelleth there,
"And thou, O God of heaven! hast heard thy servant's prayer!"

XIII.

Returning day gave to their view
The distant shore and headlands blue
Of long-sought land. Then rose on air
Loud shouts of joy, mix'd wildly strange
With voice of weeping and of prayer,
Expressive of their blessed change
From death to life, from fierce to kind,
From all that sinks, to all that elevates the mind.
Those who, by faithless fear ensnared,
Had their brave chief so rudely dared,
Now, with keen self-upbraiding stung,
With every manly feeling wrung,
Repentant tears, looks that entreat,
Are kneeling at his worshipp'd feet.
"O pardon blinded, stubborn guilt!
"O henceforth make us what thou wilt!
"Our hands, our hearts, our lives, are thine
"Thou wond'rous man! led on by power divine!"

XIV.

Ah! would some magic could arrest
The generous feelings of the breast,
Which thwart the common baser mass
Of sordid thoughts, so fleetly pass,—
A sun glimpse thro' the storm!
The rent cloud closes, tempests swell,
And its late path we cannot tell;
Lost is its trace and form.
No; not on earth such fugitives are bound;
In some veil'd, future state will the bless'd chain be found.

XV.

Columbus led them to the shore,
Which ship had never touch'd before;
And there he knelt upon the strand
To thank the God of sea and land,
And there, with mien and look elate,
Gave welcome to each toil-worn mate.
And lured with courteous signs of cheer,
The dusky natives gath'ring near;
Who on them gazed with wond'ring eyes,
As mission'd spirits from the skies.
And there did he possession claim,
In Isabella's royal name.

XVI.

It was a land, unmarr'd by art,
To please the eye and cheer the heart:
The natives' simple huts were seen
Peeping their palmy groves between,—
Groves, where each dome of sweepy leaves
In air of morning gently heaves,
And, as the deep vans fall and rise,
Changes its richly verdant dies;
A land whose simple sons till now
Had scarcely seen a careful brow;
They spent at will each passing day
In lightsome toil or active play.
Some their light canoes were guiding,
Along the shore's sweet margin gliding.
Some in the sunny sea were swimming,
The bright waves o'er their dark forms gleaming;
Some on the beach for shell-fish stooping,
Or on the smooth sand gaily trooping;
Or in link'd circles featly dancing
With golden braid and bracelet glancing.
By shelter'd door were infants creeping,
Or on the shaded herbage sleeping;
Gay feather'd birds the air were winging,
And parrots on their high perch swinging,
While humming-birds, like sparks of light,
Twinkled and vanish'd from the sight.

XVII.

They eyed the wond'rous strangers o'er and o'er,—
Those beings of the ocean and the air,
With humble, timid rev'rence; all their store
Of gather'd wealth inviting them to share;
To share whate'er their lowly cabins hold;
Their feather'd crowns, their fruits, their arms, their gold.
Their gold, that fatal gift!—O foul disgrace!
Repaid with cruel wreck of all their harmless race.

XVIII.

There some short, pleasing days with them he dwelt,
And all their simple kindness dearly felt
But they of other countries told,
Not distant, where the sun declines,

[illegible]ere reign Caziques o'er warriors bol[d]
[Ric]h with the gold of countless mines.
[An]d he to other islands sail'd,
[An]d was by other natives hail'd.
[Th]en on Hispaniola's shore,
[W]here bays and harbours to explore
[M]uch time he spent; a simple tower
[Of] wood he built, the seat to be
[A]nd shelter of Spain's infant power;
[H]oping the nursling fair to see,
[A]midst those harmless people shoot
[It]s stately stem from slender root.
[T]here nine and thirty chosen men he placed,
[G]ave parting words of counsel and of cheer;
[O]ne after one his noble friends embraced,
And to the Indian chieftain, standing near,
"Befriend my friends, and give them aid,
"When I am gone," he kindly said,
Blest them, and left them there his homeward course to steer.

XIX.

His prayer to Heaven for them preferr'd
Was not, alas! with favour heard.
Oft, as his ship the land forsook,
He landward turned his farewell look,
And cheer'd his Spaniards cross the wave,
Who distant answer faintly gave;
Distant but cheerful. On the strand
He saw their clothed figures stand
With naked forms link'd hand in hand!
Saw thus caress'd, assured, and bold,
Those he should never more behold.
Some simple Indians, gently won,
To visit land, where sets the sun,
In clouds of amber, and behold
The wonders oft by Spaniards told;
Stood silent by themselves apart.
With nature's yearnings at their heart,
And saw the coast of fading blue,
Wear soft and sadly from their view.
But soon by their new comrades cheer'd,
As o'er the waves the ship career'd,
Their wond'ring eyes aloft were cast
On white swoln sails and stately mast,
And check'ring shrouds, depicted fair,
On azure sea and azure air:
And felt, as feels the truant boy,
Who, having climb'd some crumbling mound,
Or ruin'd tower, looks wildly round,
A thrilling, fearful joy.

XX.

Then with his two small barks again
The dauntless Chief travers'd the main;
But not with fair and fav'ring gales
That erst had fill'd his western sails:
Fierce winds with adverse winds contended;
Rose the dark deep,—dark heaven descended,
And threaten'd, in the furious strife,
The ships to sink with all their freight of precious life.

XXI.

In this dread case, well may be guess'd
What dismal thoughts his soul depress'd:
"And must I in th' o'erwhelming deep,
"Our bold achievement all unknown,
"With these my brave advent'rers sleep,—
"What we have done to dark oblivion thrown?
"Sink, body! to thy wat'ry grave,
"If so God will; but let me save
"This noble fruitage of my mind,
"And leave my name and deeds behind!"

XXII.

Upon a scroll, with hasty pen,
His wond'rous tale he traced,
View'd it with tearful eyes, and then
Within a casket placed.
"Perhaps," said he, "by vessel bound
"On western cruise, thou wilt be found;
"Or make, sped by the current swift,
"To Christian shore they happy drift.
"Thy story may by friendly eyes be read;
"O'er our untimely fate warm tears be shed;
"Our deeds rehears'd by many an eager tongue,
"And requiems for our parted souls be sung."
This casket to the sea he gave;
Quick sunk and rose the freightage light,—
Appear'd on many a booming wave,
Then floated far away from his still gazing sight.
Yet, after many a peril braved,—
Of many an adverse wind the sport,
He, by his Great Preserver saved,
Anchor'd again in Palos' port.

XXIII.

O, who can tell the acclamation loud
That, bursting rose from the assembled crowd,
To hail the Hero and his gallant train,
From such adventure bold return'd again!—
The warm embrace, the oft-repeated cheer,
And many a wistful smile and many a tear!—
How, pressing close, they stood;
Look'd on Columbus with amaze,—
"Is he," so spake their wond'ring gaze,
"A man of flesh and blood?"
While cannon far along the shore
His welcome gave with deaf'ning roar.

XXIV.

And then with measur'd steps, sedate and slow,
They to the Christian's sacred temple go.
Soon as the chief within the house of God
Upon the hallow'd pavement trod,
He bowed with holy fear:—
"The God of wisdom, mercy, might,
"Creator of the day and night,
"This sea-girt globe, and every star of light,
"Is worshipp'd here."
Then on the altar's steps he knelt,
And what his inward spirit felt,
Was said unheard within that cell
Where saintly thoughts and feelings dwell;
But as the choral chaunters raise
Thro' dome and aisle the hymn of praise,
To heaven his glist'ning eyes were turn'd,
With sacred love his bosom burn'd.
On all the motley crowd
The gen'rous impulse seized; high Dons of pride
Wept like the meekest beedsman by their side,
And women sobb'd aloud.

XXV.

Nor statesmen met in high debate
Deciding on a country's fate,
Nor saintly chiefs with fearless zeal
Contending for their churches' weal,
Nor warriors, midst the battle's roar,
Who fiercely guard their native shore ;—
No power by earthly coil possest
To agitate the human breast,
Shows, from its native source diverted,
Man's nature noble, tho' perverted,
So strongly as the transient power
Of link'd devotion's sympathetic hour.
It clothes with soft unwonted grace
The traits of many a rugged face,
As bend the knees unused to kneel,
And glow the hearts unused to feel ;
While every soul, with holy passion moved,
Claims one Almighty Sire, fear'd, and adored,
and loved.

XXVI.

With western treasures, borne in fair display,
To Barcelona's walls, in grand array,
Columbus slowly held his inland way.
And still where'er he pass'd along,
In eager crowds the people throng.
The wildest way o'er desert drear
Did like a city's mart appear.
The shepherd swain forsook his sheep ;
The goat-herd from his craggy steep
Shot like an arrow to the place ;
Mechanics, housewives, left [illegible]
Their broken tasks, and [illegible] beside
The truant youth they meant to chide :
The dull Hidalgo [illegible] tower,
The Donna fair her latticed bower ;
Together press'd, fair and uncouth,
All motley forms of age and youth
And, still along the dark-ringed pile
Of clust'ring life, was heard the while
Mix'd bawling joy and shouts that rung
From many a loud and deaf'ning tongue.
Ah ! little thought the gazing throng,
As pass'd that pageant show along,
How Spain should rue, in future times,
With desert plains and fields untill'd,
And towns with listless loit'rers fill'd,
The with'ring spoil receiv'd from foreign
climes !
Columbus gave thee, thankless Spain !
A new-found world o'er which to reign ;
But could not with the gift impart
A portion of his liberal heart,
And manly [illegible]
Above a robber's [illegible]
Which hath a curse entail'd on all thy count-
less store.

XXVII.

To Barcelona [illegible], with honours meet
Such glorious deeds to grace, his sov'reigns
greet
Their mariner's return. Or hall,
Or room of state was deem'd too small
For such reception. Pageant rare !
Beneath heaven's dome, in open square,
Their gorgeous thrones were placed ;
And near them on a humbler seat,
While on each hand the titled great,
Standing in dizen'd rows, were seen,
Priests, guards, and crowds, a living screen,—
Columbus sat with noble mien,
With princely honours graced.
There to the royal pair his tale he told :
A wond'rous tale, that did not want
Or studied words or braggart's vaunt ;
When at their royal feet were laid
Gems, pearls, and plumes of many a shade,
And stores of virgin gold,
Whilst, in their feathered guise arrayed,
The Indians [illegible] obeisance paid.
And at that wond'rous story's close
The royal pair with rev'rence rose,
And kneeling on the ground, aloud
Gave thanks to Heaven. Then all the crowd,
Joining, from impulse of the heart,
The banded priest's extatic art,
With mingled voice Te Deum sang ;
With the grand choral burst, walls, towers,
and welkin rang.

XXVIII.

This was his brightest hour, too bright
For human weal ;—a glaring light,
Like sunbeam thro' the rent cloud pouring
On the broad lake, when storms are roaring ;
Bright centre of a wild and sombre scene ;
More keenly bright than Summer's settled
sheen.

XXIX.

With kingly favour brighten'd, all
His favour court, obey his call.
At princely boards, above the rest,
He took his place, admir'd, caress'd :
Proud was the Don of high degree,
Whose honour'd guest he deign'd to be.
Whate'er his purpos'd service wanted,
With ready courtesy was granted :
No envious foe durst cross his will.
While eager ship-wrights ply their skill,
To busy dock-yard, quay, or port,
Priests, lords, and citizens resort :
Their wains the heavy planks are bringing,
And hammers on the anvil ringing ;
[illegible]'d boards on boards are falling,
And brawny mate to work-mate calling :
The cable strong on windlass winding ;
On wheel of stone the edge-tool grinding ;
Red fire beneath the caldron gleaming,
And pitchy fumes from caldron steaming.
To sea and land's men too, I ween,
It was a gay, attractive scene ;
Beheld, enjoyed, day after day,
Till all his ships, in fair array,
Were bounden for their course at last,
And amply stored and bravely mann'd,
Bore far from blue, receding land.
Thus soon again, th' Atlantic vast
With gallant fleet he past.

XXX.

By peaceful natives hail'd with kindly smiles,
He shortly touch'd at various pleasant isles ;
And when at length her well-known shore
appear'd,

And he to fair Hispaniola near'd,
Upon the deck, with eager eyes,
Some friendly signal to descry,
He stood; then fir'd his signal shot,
But answ'ring fire received not.
"What may this dismal silence mean?
"No floating flag in air is seen,
"Nor ev'n the Tower itself, tho' well
"Its lofty scite these landmarks tell.
"Ha! have they so regardless proved
"Of my command'd?—their station moved!"
As closer to the shore they drew,
To hail them came no light canoe;
The beach was silent and forsaken:
Nor cloth'd nor naked forms appear'd,
Nor sound of human voice was heard;
Nought but the sea-birds from the rock,
With busy stir that flutt'ring broke;
Sad signs, which in his mind portentous fears
awaken.

XXXI.

Then eagerly on shore he went,
His scouts abroad for tidings sent;
But to his own loud echo'd cry
An Indian came with fearful eye,
Who guess'd his questions' hurried sound,
And pointed to a little mound,
Not distant far. With eager haste
The loosen'd mould aside was cast.
Bodies, alas! within that grave were found,
Which had not long been laid to rest,
Tho' so by changeful death defaced,
Nor form, nor visage could be traced.—
In Spanish garments dress'd.
Back from each living Spaniard's cheek the
blood
Ran chill, as round their noble chief they
stood,
Who sternly spoke to check the rising tear.
"Eight of my valiant men are buried here:
"Where are the rest?" the timid Indian
shook
In every limb, and slow and faintly spoke.
"Some are dead, some sick, some flown;
"The rest are up the country gone,
"Far, far away." A heavy groan
Utters the Chief; his blanch'd lips quiver,
He knows that they are gone forever.

XXXII.

But here 'twere tedious and unmeet
A dismal story to repeat,
Which was from mild Cazique received,
Their former friend, and half believed.
Him, in his cabin far apart,
Wounded they found, by Carib dart;
Receiv'd, said he, from savage foe
Spaniards defending. Then with accents low
He spoke, and ruefully began to tell,
What to those hapless mariners befell.
How that from lust of pleasure and of gold,
And mutual strife and war on Caribs made,
Their strength divided was, and burnt their
hold,
And their unhappy heads beneath the still
earth laid.

XXXIII.

Yet, spite of adverse fate, he in those climes
Spain's infant power establish'd; after-times
Have seen it flourish, and her sway main-
tain
In either world, o'er many a fair domain.
But wayward was his irksome lot the while,
Striving with malice, mutiny, and guile;
Yet vainly striving: that which most
His generous bosom sought to shun,
Each wise and lib'ral purpose crost,
Must now at Mammon's ruthless call be done.
Upon their native soil,
They who were wont in harmless play
To frolic out the passing day,
Must pine with hateful toil.

XXXIV.

Yea; this he did against his better will;
For who may stern ambition serve, and still
His nobler nature trust?
May on unshaken strength relie,
Cast Fortune as she will her dye,
And say "I will be just?"

XXXV.

Envy mean, that in the dark
Strikes surely at its noble mark,
Against him rose with hatred fell,
Which he could brave, but could not quell.
Then he to Spain indignant went,
And to his sov'reigns made complaint,
With manly freedom, of their trust,
Put, to his cost, in men unjust,
And turbulent. They graciously
His plaint and plea receiv'd; and hoisting
high
His famed and gallant flag upon the main,
He to his western world return'd again.
Where he, the sea's unwearied, dauntless
rover,
Thro' many a gulph and straight, did first
discover
That continent, whose mighty reach
From th' utmost frozen north doth stretch
Ev'n to the frozen south; a land
Of surface fair and structure grand.

XXXVI.

There, thro' vast regions rivers pour,
Whose mid-way skiff scarce sees the shore;
Which, rolling on in lordly pride,
Give to the main their ample tide;
And dauntless then, with current strong,
Impetuous, roaring, bear along,
And still their [illegible] honours keep,
In bold contention with the mighty deep.

XXXVII.

There broad-based mountains from the sight
Conceal in clouds their vasty height,
Whose frozen peaks, a vision rare,
Above the girdling clouds rear'd far in upper
air,
At times appear, and soothly seem
To the far distant, up-cast eye,
Like snowy watch-towers of the sky,—
Like passing visions of a dream.

XXXVIII.

There forests grand of olden b[illegible]
O'er-canopy the darken'd earth,
Whose trees, growth of unreckon'd time,
Rear o'er whole regions far and wide
A checker'd dome of lofty [illegible]
S[illegible] solemn, and sublime:—
A pillar'd lab'rinth, in whose trackless gloom,
Unguided feet might [illegible] till close of mortal
doom.

XXX[illegible]

There grassy plains of [illegible] green
Spread far beyond [illegible] are seen,
Whose darker bushy spo[illegible] that lie,
Strew'd o'er the level vast, [illegible]
Admiring strangers, [illegible]
Of hill or upland steep, and [illegible]
Like a calm ocean's peaceful isles,
When, morning [illegible] thro' rising vapours
smiles.

XL.

O'er this, his last—his proudest fame,
He did assert his mission'd claim,
Yet dark ambitious envy, more
Incens'd and violent than before,
With crafty machinations gain'd
His royal master's ear, who stain'd
His princely faith, and gave it power
To triumph, in a shameful hour.
A mission'd gownsman o'er the sea
Was sent his rights to supersede
And all his noble schemes impede,—
His tyrant, spy, and judge to be.
With parchment scrolls and deeds he came
To kindle fierce and wasteful flame.
Columbus' firm and dauntless soul
Submitted not to base control;
For who that hath high deeds achieved,
Whose mind hath mighty plans conceived,
Can of learn'd ignorance and pride
The petty vexing rule abide?
The lion trampled by an ass!—
No; this all-school'd forbearance would surpass.
Insulted with a felon's chain
This noble man must cross the main
And answer his foul charge to cold ungrateful Spain.

XLI.

By India's gentle race alone
Was pity to his suff'rings shown.
They on his parting wait,
And looks of kindness on him cast,
Or touch'd his mantle [illegible],
And mourn'd his a[illegible]
"May the Great Spirit smooth the tide
"With gentle gales, and be thy guide!"
And when his vessel [illegible],
With m[illegible]ning nods and gestures kind,
He saw them still upon the strand,
Tossing their dark arms on the wind.
He saw them like a helpless flock
Who soon must bear the cruel shock
Of savage wolves, yet reckless still,
Feel but the pain of present ill.
He saw the fate he could not now control,
And groan'd in bitter agony of soul.

XLII.

He trode the narrow deck with pain,
And oft survey'd his rankling chain.
The ship's brave captain grieved to see
Base irons his noble pris'ner gall,
And kindly sued to set him free;
But proudly spoke the lofty thrall,
"Until the King whom I have served,
"Who thinks this recompense deserved,
"Himself command th' unclasping stroke,
"These gyved limbs will wear their yoke.
"Yea, when my head lies in the dust,
"These chains shall in my coffin rust.
"Better than lesson'd saw, tho' rude,
"As token long preserv'd of black ingratitude!"

XLIII.

Thus pent, his manly fortitude gave way
To brooding passion's dark tumultuous sway.
Dark was the gloom within, and darker grew
Th' impending gloom without, as onward drew
Th' embattled storm that, deep'ning on its way,
With all its marshall'd host obscured the day.
Volume o'er volume, roll'd the heavy clouds,
And oft in dark dim masses, sinking slow,
Hung in the nether air, like misty shrouds,
Veiling the sombre silent deep below.
Like eddying snow-flakes from a lowering sky,
Athwart the dismal gloom the frighten'd sea-fowl fly.
Then from the solemn stillness round,
Utters the storm its awful sound.
It groans upon the distant waves;
O'er the mid-ocean wildly raves;
Recedes afar with dying strain,
That sadly thro' the troubled air
Comes like the wailings of despair,
And with redoubled strength returns again:
Through shrouds and rigging, boards and mast,
Whistles, and howls, and roars th outrageous blast.

XLIV.

[illegible] vast bed profound with heaving throws
The [illegible] waste of welt'ring waters rose.
O'er countless waves, now mounting, now deprest,
The ridgy surges swell with foaming crest,
Like Alpine barriers of some distant shore,
Now seen, now lost amidst the deaf'ning roar;
While, higher still, on broad and sweepy base,
Their growing bulk the mountain billows raise,
Each far aloft in lordly grandeur rides,
With many a vassal wave rough'ning his furrow'd sides.
Heav'd to its height, the dizzy skiff
Shoots like an eagle from his cliff
Down to the fearful gulf, and then
On the swoln waters mounts again,—
A fearful way! a fearful state
For vessel charged with living freight!

XLV.

Within, without, the tossing tempests rage:
This was, of all his earthly pilgrimage,
The injur'd Hero's fellest, darkest hour.
Yet swiftly pass'd its gloomy power;
For as the wild winds louder blew,
His troubled breast the calmer grew;
And, long before the mighty hand,
That rules the ocean and the land,
Had calm'd the sea, with pious rev'rence fill'd,
The warring passions of his soul were still'd.
Through softly parting clouds the blue sky peer'd,
And heaven-ward turn'd his eye with better feelings cheer'd.
Meek are the wise, the great, the good;—
He sighed, and thought of Him, who died on holy rood.

XLVI.

No more the angry tempest's sport,
The vessel reach'd its destined port.
A town of Christendom he greets,
And treads again its well-known streets;
A sight of wonder, grief, and shame
To those who on his landing came,
And on his state in silence gaz'd.
"This is the man whose dauntless soul"—
So spoke their looks—"Spain's power hath rais'd
"To hold o'er worlds her proud controul!
"His honour'd brows with laurel crown'd,
"His hands with felon fetters bound!"

XLVII.

And he before his Sov'reign Dame
And her stern Lord, indignant came;
And bold in conscious honour, broke
The silence of his smother'd flame,
In words that all his inward anguish spoke.
The gentle Queen's more noble breast
Its generous sympathy exprest:
And as his varied story show'd
What wrongs from guileful malice flow'd,
Th' indignant eye and flushing cheek
Did oft her mind's emotion speak.
The sordid King, with brow severe,
Could, all unmov'd, his pleadings hear;
Save, that, in spite of royal pride,
Which self-reproach can ill abide,
His crimson'd face did meanly show
Of conscious shame th' unworthy glow.
Baffled, disgraced, his enemies remain'd,
And base ambition for a time restrain'd.

XLVIII.

With four small vessels, small supply
I trow! yet granted tardily,
For such high service, he once more
The western ocean to explore
Directs his course. On many an isle
He touch'd, where cheerly, for a while,
His mariners their cares beguile
Upon the busy shore.
And there what wiles of barter keen
Spaniard and native pass between;
As feather'd crowns, whose colours change
To every hue, with vizards strange,

And gold and pearls are giv'n away,
For bead or bell, or bauble gay!
Full oft the mutt'ring Indian eyes
With conscious smile his wond'rous prize,
Beneath the shady plantain seated,
And thinks he hath the stranger cheated;
Or foots the ground like vaunting child,
Snapping his thumbs with anticks wild.

XLIX.

But if, at length, tired of their guests,
Consuming like those hateful pests,
Locusts or ants, provisions stored
For many days, they will afford
No more, withholding fresh supplies,
And strife and threat'ning clamours rise,—
Columbus gentle craft pursues,
And soon their noisy wrath subdues.
Thus speaks the chief,—"Refuse us aid
"From stores which Heaven for all hath made!
"The moon, your mistress, will this night
"From you withhold her blessed light,
"Her ire to show; take ye the risk."
Then, as half-frighten'd, half in jest,
They turn'd their faces to the east,
From ocean rose her broaden'd disk;
But when the deep eclipse came on,
By science sure to him foreknown,
How cower'd each savage at his feet,
Like spaniel couching to his lord,
Awed by the whip or angry word,
His pardon to entreat!
"Take all we have, thou heavenly man!
"And let our mistress smile again!"

L.

Or, should the ship, above, below,
Be fill'd with crowds, who will not go;
Again, to spare more hurtful force,
To harmless guile he has recourse.
"Ho! Gunner! let these scramblers know
"The power we do not use;" when, lo!
From cannon's mouth the silv'ry cloud
Breaks forth, soft curling on the air,
Thro' which appears the light'ning's glare,
And bellowing roars the thunder loud.
Quickly from bowsprit, shroud, or mast,
Or vessel's side the Indians cast
Their naked forms, the water dashing
O'er their dark heads, as stoutly lashing
The briny wave, with arms out-spread,
They gain the shore with terror's speed.

LI.

Thus checker'd still with shade and sheen
Pass'd in the West his latter scene,
As thro' the oak's toss'd branches pass
Soft moon-beams, flickering on the grass;
As on the lake's dark surface pour
Broad flashing drops of summer-shower—
As the rude cavern's sparry sides
When past the miner's taper glides.
So roam'd the Chief, and many a sea
Fathom'd and search'd unweariedly,
Hoping a western way to gain
To eastern climes,—an effort vain;
For mighty thoughts, with error uncombin'd,
Were never yet the meed of mortal mind

LII.

At length, by wayward fortune cross'd,
And oft-renew'd and irksome strife
Of sordid men,—by tempests tost,
And tir'd with turmoil of a wand'rer's life,
He sail'd again for Europe's ancient shore,
So will'd High Heav'n! to cross the seas no more.
His anchor fix'd, his sails for ever furl'd,
A toil-worn pilgrim in a weary world.

LIII.

And thus the Hero's sun went down,
Closing his day of bright renown.
Eight times thro' breeze and storm he past
O'er surge and wave th' Atlantic vast;
And left on many an island fair
Foundations which the after care
Of meaner chieftains shortly rear'd
To seats of power, serv'd, envy'd, fear'd.
No kingly conqueror, since time began
The long career of ages, hath to man
A scope so ample given for trade's bold range,
Or caus'd on earth's wide stage such rapid mighty change.

LIV.

He, on the bed of sickness laid,
Saw, unappall'd, death's closing shade;
And there, in charity and love
To man on earth and God above,
Meekly to heaven his soul resign'd,
His body to the earth consign'd.
'Twas in Valladolid he breathed his last,
And to a better, heavenly city past;
But St. Dominga, in her sacred fane
Doth his blest spot of rest and sculptur'd tomb contain.

LV.

There burghers, knights, advent'rers brave
Stood round in fun'ral weeds bedight;
And bow'd them to the closing grave,
And wish'd his soul good night.

LVI.

Now all the bold companions of his toil,
Tenants of many a clime, who wont to come,
(So fancy trows) when vex'd with worldly coil
And linger sadly by his narrow house;—
Repentant enemies, and friends that grieve
In self-upbraiding tenderness, and say,
"Cold was the love he did from us receive,"—
The fleeting restless spirits of a day,
All to their dread account are pass'd away.

LVII.

Silence, solemn, awful, deep,
Doth in that hall of death her empire keep;
Save when at times the hollow pavement, smote
By solitary wand'rer's foot, amain
From lofty dome and arch and aisle remote
Ot h circling loud response receives again.
Feel b.stranger starts to hear the growing sound,
He saw sees the blazon'd trophies waving
And gro near;—
"Ha! tread my feet so near that sacred ground!"
He stops and bows his head:—"Columbus resteth here!"

LVIII.

Some ardent youth, perhaps, ere from his home
He launch his vent'rous bark, will hither come,
Read fondly o'er and o'er his graven name
With feelings keenly touch'd,—with heart of flame;
Till wrapp'd in fancy's wild delusive dream,
Times past and long forgotten, present seem.
To his charm'd ear, the east wind rising shrill,
Seems thro' the Hero's shroud to whistle still.
The clock's deep pendulum swinging, thro' the blast
Sounds like the rocking of his lofty mast;
While fitful gusts rave like his clam'rous band,
Mix'd with the accents of his high command.
Slowly the stripling quits the pensive scene,
And burns, and sighs, and weeps to be what he has been.

LIX.

O! who shall lightly say that fame
Is nothing but an empty name!
Whilst in that sound there is a charm
The nerve to brace, the heart to warm,
As, thinking of the mighty dead,
The young, from slothful couch will start,
And vow, with lifted hands outspread,
Like them to act a noble part?

LX.

O! who shall lightly say that fame
Is nothing but an empty name!
When, but for those, our mighty dead,
All ages past, a blank would be,
Sunk in oblivion's murky bed,—
A desert bare, a shipless sea?
They are the distant objects seen,—
The lofty marks of what hath been.

LXI.

O! who shall lightly say that fame
Is nothing but an empty name!
When mem'ry of the mighty dead
To earth-worn pilgrim's wistful eye
The brightest rays of cheering shed,
That point to immortality?

LXII.

A twinkling speck, but fix'd and bright,
To guide us thro' the dreary night,
Each hero shines, and lures the soul
To gain the distant happy goal.
For is there one who, musing o'er the grave
Where lies interr'd the good, the wise, the brave,
Can poorly think, beneath the mould'ring heap,
That noble being shall for ever sleep?
No; saith the gen'rous heart, and proudly swells,—
"Tho' his cered corse lies here, with God his spirit dwells."

NOTES.

NOTE I.

The magnet of a thousand eyes,
That on his form and features cast,
His noble mien and simple guise.—P. 522.

Herrera's History of America, translated by Stevens, vol. i. p. 31.—"Columbus was tall of stature, long visaged, of a majestick aspect, his nose hooked, his eyes grey, a complexion clear, somewhat ruddy; his beard and hair, when young, fair, though through many hardships they soon turned grey. He was witty, and well-spoken, and eloquent, moderately grave, affable to strangers, to his own family mild. His conversation was discreet, which gained him the affection of those he had to deal with; and his presence attracted respect, having an air of authority and grandeur; always temperate in eating and drinking, and modest in his dress."

NOTE II.

Had recogniz'd, in that bright hour,
The disappointed suppliant of dull power,
Who had in vain of kings and states desired.—P. 522.

It is curious to see the many objections, which were made by prejudice and ignorance, to his proposal; and also the means by which he became at length successful in his suit to the crown of Castile. To perceive what small considerations, and petty applications of individuals, are sometimes concerned in promoting or preventing the greatest events, see the Appendix, No. II.

NOTE III.

The patient sage, who by his lamp's faint light
O'er chart and map spent the long silent night.
P. 522.

Herrera:—"He was very knowing in astrology, expert in navigation, understood Latin, and made verses."

NOTE IV.

That Power Divine, whom storms obey,
(Whisper'd his heart) a leading star,
Will guide him on his blessed way.— P. 522.

Herrera:—"As to religion, he was very zealous and devout, often saying, 'I will do this in the name of the Trinity;' kept the fasts of the church very strictly; often confessed and communicated; said all the canonical hours; abhorred swearing and blasphemy, had a peculiar devotion to our Lady and St. Francis; was very thankful to Almighty God for the mercies he received, zealous for God's honour, and very desirous of the conversion of the Indians. In other respects, he was a man of undaunted courage and high thought, fond of great enterprizes, patient, ready to forgive wrongs, and only desirous that offenders should be sensible of their faults; unmoved in the many troubles and adversities that attended him; ever relying on Divine Providence."

NOTE V.

With more redoubled danger must contend,
Than storm or wave,—a fierce and angry crew.
P. 523.

Herrera, vol. i. p. 37.—"The men being all unacquainted with that voyage, and seeing no hopes of any comfort, nothing appearing but sky and water for so many days, all of them carefully observed every token they saw, being then further from land than any man had ever been. The 19th of September, a sea-gull came to the Admiral's ship. * * * As the aforesaid tokens proved of no effect, the men's fears increased, and they took occasion to mutter, gathering in parcels aboard the ships, saying that the Admiral, in a mad humour, had thought to make himself great at the expense of their lives; and though they had done their duty, and sailed further from land than ever any men had done before, they ought not to contribute to their own destruction, still proceeding without any reason till their provisions failed them, which, though they were ever so sparing, would not suffice to carry them back, no more than the ships, that were already very crazy, so that nobody would think they had done amiss; and that so many had opposed the Admiral's project, the more credit would be given to them. Nay, there wanted not some who said, that, to put an end to all debates, the best way would be to throw him into the sea, and say he had unfortunately fallen in as he was attentively gazing on the stars; and since nobody would go about to inquire into the truth of it, that was the best means for them to return and save themselves. Thus the mutinous temper went on from day to day, and the evil designs of the men, which very much perplexed Columbus: but some times giving good words, and at other times putting them in mind of the punishment they would incur, if they obstructed the voyage, he cured their insolence with fear; and as a confirmation of the hopes he gave them of concluding their voyage successfully, he often put them in mind of the above-mentioned signs and tokens, promising they would soon find a vast rich country, where they would all conclude their labour well bestowed."

NOTE VI.

Descried afar the blessed sight.
"It moves, it slowly moves, like ray
"Of torch that guides some wanderer's way!'
—P. 524.

Herrero:—"........But afterwards it was seen twice, and looked like a little candle raised up, and then taken down; and Columbus did not question but it was a true light, and that they were near land, and so it proved, and it was of people passing from one house to another."—(See Appendix, No. III.)

NOTE VII.

Columbus led them to the shore
Which ship had never touched before,

And there he knelt upon the strand,
To thank the God of sea and land.—P. 524.

Herrera, vol. i. p. 46.—"When day appeared, they perceived it was an island fifteen leagues in length, plain, much wooded, well watered, having a lake of fresh water in the middle of it, well stored with people, who stood full of admiration on the shore imagining the ships to be some monsters, and with the utmost impatience to know what they were; and the Spaniards were no less eager to be on land. The Admiral went ashore in his boat, armed, and the royal colours flying, as did the captains Martin Monzo Pinzon and Vincent Yanez Pinzon, carrying the colours of their enterprize, being a green cross, with some crowns, and the names of their Catholic Majesties. Having all of them kissed the ground, and on their knees given thanks to God for the goodness he had shown them, the Admiral stood up, and gave that island the name of St. Salvador, which the natives call Cannaham, being one of those afterwards called the Lucayo Islands, 950 leagues from the Canaries, discovered after they had sailed thirty-three days. Then, with the proper solemnity of expressions, he took possession of it in the name of their Catholic Majesties, for the crowns of Castile and Leon, testified by Roderick Escovedo, notary of the fleet, a great multitude of the natives looking on. The Spaniards immediately owned him for their Admiral and Viceroy, and swore obedience to him as representing the King's person in that country, with all the joy and satisfaction that so great an event deserved, all of them begging his pardon for the trouble and uneasiness they had given him, by inconstancy and faint-heartedness."

Note VIII.

They eyed those wond'rous strangers o'er and o'er,—
Those beings of the ocean and the air.—P. 525.

It is often mentioned by Herrera, that the Indians considered the Spaniards as beings come from heaven. It is mentioned, page 55., that in an island, where Columbus had sent his men to explore the interiour, "The prime men came out to meet them, led them by the arms, and lodged them in one of those new houses, causing them to sit down on seats made of one solid piece of wood in the shape of a beast with very short legs, the tail turned up, and the head before, with eyes and ears of gold; and all the Indians sat about them on the ground, and one after another went to kiss their feet and hands, believing they came from heaven; and gave them boiled roots to eat, which tasted like chesnuts, (probably potatoes,) and entreated them to stay there, or at least rest themselves for five or six days, because the Indians that went with them said many kind things of them. Abundance of women coming in to see them, all the men went out, and they with the same admiration kissed their feet and hands, touching them as if they had been holy things, offering what they brought," &c.

Note IX.

There nine-and-thirty chosen men he placed,
Gave parting words of counsel and of cheer.—P. 525.

Herrera, after mentioning the building of the fort or rather tower of wood, says,—"He made choice of thirty-nine men to stay in the fort, such as were most willing, cheerful, and of good disposition; the strongest and best able to endure fatigues of all that he had. * * Whom he furnished with biscuit and wine, and other provisions, for a year, leaving seeds to sow, and all the things he had brought to barter, being a great quantity, as also the great guns, and other arms, that were in the ship and boat that belonged to it." See Appendix, No. IV. for the speech which Columbus made to them on his departure.

Note X.

Upon a scroll, with hasty pen,
His wond'rous tale he traced.—P. 525.

Herrera, book ii. chap. 2.—"Tuesday, the 12th of February, the sea began to swell with great and dangerous storms, and he drove most of the night without any sail: afterwards he put out a little sail. The waves broke and wrecked the ships. The next morning the wind slackened; but on Wednesday night it rose again with dreadful waves, which hindered the ships' way, so that he could not shift them. The Admiral kept under a main-top-sail, reefed only to bear up the ship against the waves; but perceiving how great the danger was, he let it run before the wind, there being no remedy. * * * The Admiral finding himself near death, to the end that some knowledge might come to their Catholic Majesties of what he had done in their service, he writ as much as he could of what he had discovered on a skin of parchment; and having wrapped it in a piece of ceer-cloth, he put it into a wooden cask, and cast it into the sea, all the men imagining it had been some piece of devotion, and presently the wind slackened."

Note XI.

He, by his Great Preserver saved,
Anchor'd again in Palos' port.—P. 525.

Herrera:—"Wednesday, the 13th of March, he sailed with his caravel for Sevil. Thursday, before sun-rising, he found himself off Cape St. Vincent, and Friday the 15th, off Saltes, and at noon he passed over the bar, with the flood, into the port from whence he had first departed, on Friday the 3d of August the year before, so that he spent six months and a half on the voyage. * * He landed at Palos, was received with a solemn procession and much rejoicing of the whole town, all admiring so great an action," &c.

NOTE XII.

With western treasures, borne in fair display
To Barcelona's walls, in grand array.—P. 525

Herrera:—"He carried with him green and red parrots, and other things to be admired, never before seen in Spain. He set out from Sevil, and the fame of this novelty being spread abroad, the people flocked to the road to see the Indians and the Admiral."

NOTE XIII.

And manly mind to bid thee soar
Above a robber's lust of ore,
Which hath a curse entail'd on all thy countless store.—P. 526.

The effects of the narrow policy of the Spanish government, regarding her dealings with America, and the short-sighted avarice of the many adventurers sent out to her colonies there, are thus mentioned by Robertson.

Robertson, Hist. of America, book 3.—"Under the reigns of Ferdinand and Isabella, and Charles the Fifth, Spain was one of the most flourishing countries of Europe. Her manufactures in wool, and flax, and silk, were so extensive as not only to furnish what was necessary for her own consumption, but to afford a surplus for exportation. When a market for them formerly unknown, and to which she alone had access, was opened in America, she had recourse to her domestic store, and found there an abundant supply. This new employment must naturally have added vivacity to the spirit of industry, nourished and invigorated by it, the manufacturers, the population, the wealth of Spain, might have gone on increasing in the same proportion with the growth of her colonies, &c. * * * But various causes prevented this. The same thing happens to nations as to individuals. The wealth which flows in gradually and with moderate increase, feeds and nourishes that activity which is friendly to commerce, and calls it forth into vigorous and well-conducted exertions; but when opulence pours in suddenly, and with too full a stream, it overturns all sober plans of industry, and brings along with it a taste for what is wild and extravagant, and daring in business or in action. Such was the great and sudden augmentation of power and revenue that the possession of America brought into Spain, and some symptoms of its pernicious influence upon the political operations of that monarchy soon began to appear."

(See this subject pursued further in the Appendix, No. III.)

NOTE XIV.

To Barcelona come, with honours meet
Such glorious deeds to grace, his Sov'reigns greet.—P. 526

Herrera, vol. i. page 93.—"The Admiral arrived at Barcelona about the middle of April, where a solemn reception was made him, the whole court flocking out in such numbers, that the streets could not hold them, admiring to see the Admiral, the Indians, and the things he had brought, which were carried uncovered; and the more to honour the Admiral, their Majesties ordered their royal throne to be placed in public, where they sat, with Prince John. The Admiral came in, attended by a multitude of gentlemen: when he came near, the King stood up and gave him his hand to kiss, bid him rise, ordered a chair to be brought and him to sit down in the royal presence, where he gave an account, in a very sedate and discreet manner, of the mercy God had shewn him in favour of their Highnesses, of his voyage and discoveries, and the hopes he had conceived of discovering greater countries, and shewed him the Indians as they went in their own native places, and the other things he had brought. Their Majesties arose, and kneeling down with their hands lifted up and tears in their eyes, returned thanks to God, and then the singers of the chapel began the Te Deum."

NOTE XV.

With kingly favour brightened, all
His favour court, obey his call.
At princely boards, above the rest,
He took his place, admir'd, caress'd.—P. 526.

Herrera:—"The king took the Admiral by his side when he went along the city of Barcelona, and did him much honour other ways; and therefore, all the grandees and other noblemen honoured and invited him to dinner; and the cardinal of Spain, Don Pedro Gonzeles de Mendoza, a prince of much virtue and a noble spirit, was the first grandee, that, as they were going one day from the palace, carried the Admiral to dine with him, and seated him at the head of the table, and caused his meat to be served up covered and the essay to be taken, and from that time forward he was served in that manner."

NOTE XVI.

He stood; then fired his signal shot,
But answ'ring fire received not.—P. 527.

Herrera, vol. i. page 112.—"The next day, Monday, all the fleet entered the port: the Admiral saw the fort burnt down, whence he concluded that all the Christians were dead, which troubled him very much, and the more because no Indians appeared. The next day he went ashore very melancholy, finding no body to inquire of. Some things belonging to the Spaniards were found, the sight whereof was grievous."

NOTE XVII.

Bodies alas! within that grave were found,
Which had not long been laid to rest.—P. 527.

Herrera:—"Wednesday, the 27th of November, he came to anchor with his fleet at the mouth of the river Navedad. About midnight a canoe came aboard to the Admiral;

the Indians cried "*Amirante*," that is, Admiral. * * * He inquired of them after the Spaniards, they said some had died, and that others were gone up the country with their wives. The Admiral guessed that they were all dead, but was obliged not to take notice of it. * * * Near the fort they discovered seven or eight men buried and others nor far off, whom they knew to be Christians by their being clad; and it appeared that they had not been buried above a month. Whilst they were searching about, one of Gascannagarie's (the Cazique's) brothers came with some Indians who had learnt a little Spanish. * * * They said, that as soon as the Admiral was gone, they began to fall out among themselves and to disobey their commander, going about in an insolent manner to take what women and gold they pleased; and that Peter Gutierrez and Escovedo (Spaniards) killed one Tacoun; and that they two, with nine others, went away with the women they had taken, and the baggage, to the country of a lord whose name was Caunabo and was lord of the mines, who killed them all."

Further on it is said, that when Columbus went to visit the Cazique, he told him the same story, and showed his wounds from Indian weapons, which he had received in defending the Spaniards.

So many disasters, partly from misconduct, and partly from the difficulties they had to encounter from the climate, and depending on the old world for provisions, befell the first colonists which were settled in the West Indies, that the places where they had once been were afterwards looked upon by the Spaniards with a superstitious dread, as haunted by spectres and demons.

(See Appendix, No. V. for a curious anecdote in confirmation of this.)

Note XVIII.

—that which most
His generous bosom sought to shun
Must now at Mammon's ruthless call be done.
P. 527.

It is sad to reflect that Columbus, always friendly and gentle to the natives, and most anxious to have them converted to the christian religion, was yet compelled, in order to satisfy the impatient cupidity of their Catholic Majesties, to make them work in the mines, which very soon caused great mortality amongst them. Gold must be sent to Spain; otherwise the government of those countries would have been transferred from him to a set of rapacious and profligate adventurers.

Note XIX.

Envy mean, that in the dark
Strikes surely at its noble mark,
Against him rose with hatred fell,
Which he could brave, but could not quell.—
P. 527.

From evil reports sent against the Admiral to Spain, one John Aguado was sent to the new world with credentials to this effect: "Gentlemen, Esquires, and others, who by our command are in the Indies, we send to you John Aguado, our groom, who will discourse you in our name. We desire you to give entire credit to him. Madrid, April 9th. 1495." This same groom, as might be expected, did not fail to thwart Columbus in many affairs, and set a bad example to others: he resolved therefore to return to Spain and clear himself of those slanders to their Majesties.

Note XX.

Impetuous, roaring, bear along,
And still their sep'rate honours keep,
In bold contention with the mighty deep—P. 527.

It is scarcely necessary to give any authority for the immense width and power of those rivers; but as this fact is implied in a sublime and descriptive simile in the writings of a modern poet, whose rich imagination is perhaps never betrayed into inaccuracy, I am tempted to insert it.

——————"The battle's rage
Was like the strife which currents wage,
When Orinoco in his pride
Rolls to the main no tribute tide,
But 'gainst broad ocean urges far
A rival sea of roaring war;
While in ten thousand eddies driven,
The billows fling their foam to heaven;
And the pale pilot seeks in vain
Where rolls the river, where the main."—
Rookby.

Note XXI.

A mission'd gownsman o'er the sea
Was sent his rights to supersede.—P. 528.

Herrera, vol. i. page 237.—"Mention has been made of the discoveries made by the Spaniards in the years 1499 and 1500, and of what the Portuguese found by chance, as also that the Admiral's messengers arrived at the court with an account of the insurrection of Francis Roldan, and the persons sent by him, who gave their complaints against the Admiral. Having heard both parties, their Majesties resolved to remove the Admiral from the government, under colour that he himself desired a judge should be sent over to inquire into the insolencies committed by Roldan and his followers, and a lawyer that should take upon himself the administration of justice. * * * * Their Majesties made choice of Francis Bovadilla, commendary of the order of Calatrava, a native of Medina del Campo, and gave him the title and commission of Examiner, under which he was to enter the island; as also governor, to make use of and publish these in due time." (He was at first to conceal the extent of his commission.)

See, on this subject, Appendix, No. VI.

Note XXII.

He trode the narrow deck with pain,
And oft survey'd his rankling chain.—P. 528.

• Herrera:—"In short, Bovadilla seized the Admiral and both his brothers, Don Bartholomew and Don James, without even so much as seeing or speaking to them. They were all put into irons, and no person permitted to converse with them; a most inhuman action, considering the dignity of the person, and the inestimable service he had done the crown of Spain. The Admiral afterwards kept his fetters, and ordered they should be buried with him, in testimony of the ingratitude of this world. Bovadilla resolved to send the Admiral into Spain, aboard the two ships that had brought him over. Alonzo de Vallejo was appointed to command the two caravels, and ordered, as soon as he arrived at Cadiz, to deliver the prisoners to the bishop, John Rodrigues de Fousico; and it was reported that Bovadilla had put this affront upon its Admiral to please the bishop. It was never heard that Francis Roldan, or Don Fernando de Guevera, or any other of the mutineers who had committed so many outrages in that island, were punished, or any proceedings made against them."

Note XXIII.

Until the king whom I have served,
Who thinks this recompense deserved,
Himself command th' unclasping stroke.—P. 528.

Herrera:—"Alonzo de Vallejo and the master of the caravel, Gordo, aboard which the Admiral was brought over, treated him and his brothers very well, and would have knocked off their fetters; but he would not consent to it himself, till it was done by order of their Majesties."

Note XXIV.

With four small vessels, small supply
I trow! yet granted tardily
For such high service.—P. 529.

Herrera, vol. i. page 251.—"Admiral Columbus being come to court, after having made his complaints against Francis de Bovadillo, and what had been said as before ordered, never ceased soliciting to be restored to his full rights and prerogatives, since he had performed all he had promised, and had been so great a sufferer in the service of the crown, offering, though he was old and much broken, to make considerable discoveries, believing that he might find a streight or passage about that part where Nombre de Dios now stands. Their Majesties fed him with fair words and promises, till they could hear what account Nicholas de Obando would send them about affairs of the island. Columbus demanded four ships and provisions for two years, which they granted him, with a promise that, if he died by the way, his son Don James should succeed him in all his rights and prerogatives. The Admiral set out from Granada to forward this business at Sevil and Cadiz, where he brought four vessels, the biggest not above seventy ton, and the least not under fifty; with one hundred and fifty men, and all necessaries."

Note XXV.

And there what wiles of barter keen
Spaniard and native pass between.—P. 529.

Many accounts given by Herrera of the barter carried on between the Spaniards and Indians, are not unlike that which I have given in this passage of the legend.

Note XXVI.

The moon, your mistress, will this night
From you withhold her blessed light.—P. 529.

This circumstance is so well known that it were needless to mention it here, only as the account given of it by Herrera is rather curious, the reader may, perhaps, be amused by it. After telling how greatly the Spaniards were distressed for provisions, and how the Indians refused to supply them, he says, —"The Admiral knew there would be an eclipse of the moon within three days, whereupon he sent an Indian that spoke Spanish to call the Caziques and prime men of those parts to him. They being come a day before the eclipse, he told them, that the Spaniards were Christians, servants of the Great God that dwells in heaven, Lord and Maker of all things, and rewards the good and punishes the wicked," &c. * * * Wherefore they might that night observe, at the rising of the moon, that she would appear of a bloody hue, to denote the punishment God would inflict on them. When he had made his speech, some of them went away in a fright, and others scoffed at it; but the eclipse beginning as soon as the moon was up, and increasing, the higher she was, it put them into such a consternation, that they hastened to the ships, grievously lamenting, and loaded with provisions; entreating the Admiral to pray God that he would not be angry with them, and they would for the future bring all the provisions he should have occasion for. The Admiral answered, he would offer up his prayers to God, and then, shutting himself up, waited till the eclipse was at its height, and ready to decrease, telling them he had prayed for them," &c. * * * "The Indians perceiving the eclipse to go off, and entirely to cease, returned the Admiral many thanks," &c.

Note XXVII.

Again, to spare more hurtful force,
To harmless guile he has recourse.—P. 529.

This expedient of Columbus for clearing his ship, when the Indians had become too fond of being aboard, is told in an amusing manner by Herrera; but I cannot at present discover the passage.

Note XXVIII.

Hoping a western way to gain
To eastern climes, an effort vain.—P. 529.

This was one great object with Columbus, when he first projected his great discoveries, and it made him so unwilling when he came to the mouth of one of the large rivers of the continent, to believe it was a river, as a great continent there made against the probability of his discovering what he desired. Another notion of his, more fanciful, is mentioned by Herrera.

"The Admiral was surprised at the immense quantity of fresh water before spoken of, and no less at the extraordinary coolness of the air so near the equinoctial; and he particularly observed that the people thereabouts were whites, their hair long and smooth, more subtle and ingenious than those he had seen before. These things made him conceit that the terrestrial Paradise might be in those parts, with other notions which make not to our purpose."

Note XXIX.

No kingly conqueror, since time began
The long career of ages, hath to man
A scope so ample given for trade's bold range
Or caused on earth's wide stage such rapid, mighty change.—P. 530.

Those mighty conquerors who have overrun the greatest extent of country, have, generally speaking, produced only temporary change; the kingdoms subdued by them falling back again to their old masters, or becoming, under the successors of the conqueror, nearly the same in government and manners which they would have been, had he never existed. The discoveries of Columbus opened a boundless and lasting field for human exertion, which gave a new impulse to every maritime country in Europe. There is one conqueror indeed, Mahomet, the exertions of whose extraordinary life produced, unhappily, wide and lasting effects, but of a character so different from those produced by Columbus, that they can scarcely be considered as at variance with what is here asserted of the great navigator. The change which his discoveries occasioned in the new world must also be taken into the account; and though this is a very melancholy consideration, as far as the West Indies are concerned, yet, that which took place on the Continent of America, though for a time at great expense of life, was good, and most thankfully to be acknowledged by every friend to humanity. It put an end to the most dismal and bloody superstition under the tyrannical government of Mexico: and we can scarcely regret the overthrow of the milder religion and government of Peru, though we may lament the manner of it, and detest the cruelty and injustice of the conquerors; for human flesh was not an unheard-of banquet in that country; and, at the funerals of great people, many servants and dependents were killed or buried alive to become their servants still in another state of being.

See what Herrera says on this subject, Appendix, No. IX.

Robertson says, in speaking of the Mexicans,—"The aspect of superstition in Mexico was gloomy and atrocious; its divinities were clothed with terror, and delighted in vengeance; they were exhibited to the people under detestable forms which created horror; the figures of serpents, tygers, and of other destructive animals, decorated their temples. Fear was the only principle that inspired their votaries. Fasts, mortifications, and penances, all rigid and many of them excruciating to an extreme degree, were the means employed to appease the wrath of their gods, and the Mexicans never approached their altars, without sprinkling them with blood drawn from their own bodies. But of all offerings, human sacrifices were the most acceptable. This religious belief, mingling with the implacable spirit of vengeance, and adding new force to it, every captive taken in war was brought to the temple, was devoted as a victim to the deity, and sacrificed with rites no less solemn than cruel. The heart and the head were the portion consecrated to the gods; the warrior, by whose prowess the prisoner had been seized, carried off the body to feast upon it with his friends. Under the impression of ideas so dreary and terrible, and accustomed daily to scenes of bloodshed, rendered awful by religion, the heart of man must harden, and be steeled to every sentiment of humanity. The spirit of the Mexicans was accordingly unfeeling, and the genius of their religion so far counter balanced the influence of policy and arts, that notwithstanding their progress in both, their manners, instead of softening, became more fierce. To what circumstances it was owing that superstition assumed such a dreadful form among the Mexicans, we have not sufficient knowledge of their history to determine. But its influence is visible, and produced an effect that is singular in the history of the human species. The manners of the people of the new world, who had made the greatest progress in the arts of policy, were in several respects the most ferocious, and the barbarity of some of their customs exceeds even those of the savage state."

Note XXX.

'Twas in Valladolid he breathed his last.—P. 530.

Herrera, vol. i. page 311.—"When the Adelantado Don Bartholomew Columbus was soliciting, as has been above said, the Admiral's distemper grew upon him, till having made the necessary dispositions, he departed this life with much piety at Valladolid on Ascension-day, being the 20th of May, 1506. His body was conveyed to the monastery of Carthusians at Sevil, and from thence to the city of Santo Domingo, in Hispaniola, where it lies in the chancel of the cathedral."

LADY GRISELD BAILLIE.

When, sapient, dauntless, strong, heroic man!
Our busy thoughts thy noble nature scan,
Whose active mind, its hidden cell within,
Frames that from which the mightiest works begin;
Whose secret thoughts are light to ages lending,
Whose potent arm is right and life defending,
For helpless thousands, all on one high soul depending:—
We pause, delighted with the fair survey,
And haply in our wistful musings say,
What mate, to match this noble work of heaven,
Hath the all-wise and mighty master given?
One gifted like himself, whose head devises
High things, whose soul at sound of battle rises,
Who with glav'd hand will thro' arm'd squadrons ride,
And, death confronting, combat by his side;
Will share with equal wisdom grave debate,
And all the cares of chieftain, kingly state?
Aye, such, I trow, in female form hath been
Of olden times, and may again be seen,
When cares of empire or strong impulse swell
The generous breast, and to high deeds impel;
For who can these as meaner times upbraid,
Who think of Saragossa's valiant maid?
But she of gentler nature, softer, dearer,
Of daily life, the active, kindly cheerer;
With bosom, age, or childhood shielding,
And in the storms of life, tho' mov'd, unyielding;
Strength in her gentleness, hope in her sor-
Whose darkest hours some ray of brightness borrow
From better days to come, whose meek devotion
Calms every wayward passion's wild commotion;
In want and suff'ring, soothing, useful, sprightly,
Bearing the press of evil hap so lightly,
Till evil's self seems its strong hold betraying
To the sweet witch'ry of such winsome playing:
Bold from affection, if by nature fearful,
With varying brow, sad, tender, anxious, cheerful,—
This is meet partner for the loftiest mind,
With crown or helmet graced,—yea, this is womankind!
Come ye, whose grateful memory retains
Dear recollection of *her* tender pains
To whom your oft-conn'd lesson, daily said,
With kiss and cheering praises was repaid;
To gain whose smile, to shun whose mild rebuke,
Your irksome task was learnt in silent nook,
Tho' truant thoughts the while, your lot exchanging
With freer elves, were wood and meadow ranging;—
And ye, who best the faithful virtues known
Of a link'd partner, tried in weal and woe,
Like the slight willow, now aloft, now bending,
But, still unbroken, with the blast contending,
Whose very look call'd virtuous vigour forth,
Compelling you to match her noble worth;—
And ye, who in a sister's modest praise
Feel manly pride, and think of other days,
Pleased that the play-mate of your native home
Hath in her prime an honour'd name become;—
And ye, who in a duteous child have known
A daughter, help-mate, sister, blent in one,
From whose dear hand which, to no hireling leaves
Its task of love, your age sweet aid receives,
Who reckless marks youth's waning faded hue,
And thinks her bloom well spent, when spent for you;—
Come all, whose thoughts such dear remembrance bear,
And to my short and faithful lay give ear.

I.

Within a prison's hateful cell,
Where, from the lofty window fell,
Thro' grated bars, the sloping beam,
Defin'd, but faint, on couch of stone,
There sat a pris'ner sad and lone,
Like the dim tenant of a dismal dream.
Deep in the shade, by low-arch'd door,
With iron nails thick studded o'er,
Whose threshold black is cross'd by those
Who here their earthly being close,
Or issue to the light again
A scaffold with their blood to stain,—
Moved something softly. Wistful ears
Are quick of sense, and from his book
The pris'ner rais'd his eyes with eager look,—
"Is it a real form that thro' the gloom appears?"

II.

It was indeed of flesh and blood,
The form that quickly by him stood;
Of stature low, of figure light,
In motion like some happy sprite;
Yet meaning eyes and varying cheek,
Now red, now pale, seem'd to bespeak,

Of riper years the cares and feeling
Which with a gentle heart were dealing.
"Such sense in eyes so simply mild!
"Is it a woman or a child?
"Who art thou, damsel sweet? are not mine eyes beguiled?"

III.

"No; from the Redbraes' tower I come;
"My father is Sir Patrick Hume;
"And he has sent me for thy good,
"His dearly honour'd Jerviswood.
"Long have I round these walls been straying
"As if with other children playing;
"Long near the gate have kept my watch
"The sentry's changing-time to catch.
"With stealthy steps I gain'd the shade
"By the close-winding staircase made,
"And when the surly turnkey enter'd,
"But little dreaming in his mind
"Who follow'd him so close behind,
"Into this darken'd cell, with beating heart, I ventured."

IV.

Then from the simple vest that braced
Her gentle breast, a letter traced
With well-known characters, she took,
And with an eager, joyful look,
Her eyes up to his visage cast,
His changing countenance to scan,
As o'er the lines his keen glance past.
She saw a faint glow tinge the sickly wan;
She saw his eyes thro' tear-drops raise
To heaven their look of silent praise,
And hope's fresh touch undoing lines of care
Which stress of evil times had deeply graven there.
Meanwhile, the joy of sympathy to trace
Upon her innocent and lovely face
Had to the sternest, darkest sceptic given
Some love of human kind, some faith in righteous Heaven.

V.

What blessings on her youthful head
Were by the grateful patriot shed,
(For such he was, good and devoted,
And had at risk of life promoted
His country's freedom and her faith,
Nor reck'ning made of worldly skathe)
How warm, confiding, and sincere,
He gave to her attentive ear
The answer which her cautious sire
Did to his secret note require:—
How after this with 'quiries kind,
He ask'd for all she left behind
In Redbraes' tower, her native dwelling,
And set her artless tongue a-telling,
Which urchin dear had tallest grown,
And which the greatest learning shown,
Of lesson, sermon, psalm, and note,
And Sabbath questions learnt by rote,
And merry tricks and gambols play'd
By ev'ning fire, and forfeits paid,—
I will not here rehearse, nor will I say,
How, on that bless'd and long-remember'd day,
The pris'ner's son, deserving such a sire,
First saw the tiny maid, and did admire,
That one so young and wise and good and fair
Should be an earthly thing that breath'd this nether air.

VI.

E'en let my reader courteously suppose,
That from this visit happier days arose;
Suppose the pris'ner from his thraldom freed,
And with our lay proceed.

VII.

The damsel, glad her mission'd task was done,
Back to her home long since had blithely gone;
And there remain'd, a meek and duteous child
Where useful toil, with play between,
And pastime on the sunny green,
The weeks and months of passing years beguiled.

VIII.

Scotland the while convulsive lay
Beneath a hateful tyrant's sway;
For James's bigot mind th' ascendant gain'd,
And fiercely raged blind ruthless power;
While men, who true to conscience' voice remain'd,
Were forced in caves and dens to cower;
Bereft of home or hold or worldly wealth,
Upon the bleak and blasted heath,
They sang their glorious Maker's praise by stealth,
Th' inclement sky beneath.
And some were forced to flee their native land,
Or in the grated prison's gloom,
Dealt to them by corruption's hateful hand,
Abide their fatal doom.

IX.

And there our former thrall, the good,
The firm, the gentle Jerviswood
Again was pent with sickness worn,
Watching each pulse's feebler beat
Which promised, ere the fated morn,
The scaffold of its prey to cheat.

X.

And now that patriot's ancient, faithful friend,
Our maiden's sire, must to the tempest bend.
He too must quit his social hearth,
The place where cheerful friends resort,
And trav'llers rest and children sport,
To lay him on the mould'ring earth;
Thro' days of lonely gloom to rest his head
With them, who, in those times unblest,
Alone had sure and fearless rest,
The still, the envied dead.

XI.

Sad was his hiding-place, I ween,
A fearful place, where sights had been,
Full oft, by the benighted rustic seen;
Aye, elrich forms in sheeted white,
Which, in the waning moonlight blast,
Pass by, nor shadow onward cast,
Like any earthly wight;

A place, where midnight lights had shone
Thro' charnel windows, and the glancing
Of wand'ring flame, on church-path lone,
Betray'd the hour when fiends and hags were dancing,
Or to their vigil foul with trooping haste advancing.
A place, whose gate with weeds o'ergrown,
Hemlock and dock of deep dull green,
That climbing rank the lintals screen,
What time the moon is riding high
The very hounds went cowering by,
Or watch'd afar with howling moan;
For brutes, 'tis said, will see what meets no human eye.

XII.

You well may guess his faithful wife
A heart of heavy cheer had then,
List'ning her household's hum of life,
And thinking of his silent den.
"Oh! who will to that vault of death,
"At night's still watch repair,
"The dark and chilly sky beneath,
"And needful succour bear?
"Many his wants, who bideth lonely there!"

XIII.

Pleased had you been to have beheld,
Like fire-sparks from the stricken stone,
Like sun-beams on the rain-drop thrown,
The kindling eye of sweet Griseld,
When thus her mother spoke, for known
Was his retreat to her alone.
The wary dame to none beside
The dangerous secret might confide.
"O fear not, mother! I will go,
"Betide me good or ill:
"Nor quick nor dead shall daunt me; no;
"Nor witch-fires, dancing in the dark,
"Nor owlet's shriek, nor watch-dog's bark,
"For I will think, the while, I do God's blessed will.
"I'll be his active Brownie sprite,
"To bring him needful food, and share his lonely night."

XIV.

And she, ere stroke of midnight bell,
Did bound her for that dismal cell;
And took that haunted, fearful way
Which, till that hour, in twilight grey
She never by herself had past,
Or ev'n athwart its copse-wood cast
A hasty glance, for dread of seeing
The form of some unearthly being.
But now, far other forms of fear
To her scared sight appear,
And, like a sudden fit of ague, move her;
The stump of some old, blasted tree,
Or upright stone, or colt broke free
To range at will the dewy lea,
Seem lurking spy or rustic lover,
Who may, ev'n thro' the dark, her secret drift discover.

XV.

She pauses oft.—"What whispers near?—
"The babbling burn sounds in mine ear.
"Some hasty form the pathway crosses:—
"'Tis but a branch the light wind tosses.
"What thing is that by church-yard gate,
"That seems like spearman tall to wait?
"'Tis but the martyr's slender stone
"Which stands so stately and alone:
"Why should I shrink? why should I fear?
"The vault's black door is near."
And she with icy fingers knock'd,
And heard with joy the door unlock'd,
And felt the yawning fence give way
As deep and harsh the sounding hinges bray.

XVI.

But to describe their tender meeting,
Tears shed unseen, affection utter'd
In broken words, and blessings mutter'd,
With many a kiss and kindly greeting,
I know not; would my feeble skill
Were meeter yoke-mate to my will!

XVII.

Then from the struck flint flew the spark,
And lighted taper, faint and small,
Gave out its dun rays thro' the dark,
On vaulted roof and crusted wall;
On stones reversed in crumbling mould,
And blacken'd poles of bier decay'd
That lumb'ring on the ground were laid;
On sculptured wreaths, defaced and old,
And shreds of painted 'scutcheons torn
Which once, in pointed lozenge spread,
The pillar'd church aloft had worn;
While new-swept nook and lowly bed,
Strange sight in such a place!
Betray'd a piteous case,—
Man from man's converse torn, the living with the dead.

XVIII.

The basket's store of viands and bread,
Produced with looks of kind inviting,
Her hands with busy kindness spread;
And he her kindly care requiting,
Fell to with thanks and relish keen,
Nodded and quaff'd her health between,
While she his glee return'd, her smiles with tears uniting.
No lordling at his banquet rare
E'er tasted such delicious fare;
No beauty on her silken seat,
With lover kneeling at her feet,
E'er wept and smiled by turns with smiles so fondly sweet.

XIX.

But soon youth's buoyant gladsome nature
Spreads joy unmix'd o'er every feature,
As she her tale is archly telling
Of feuds within their busy dwelling,
While, round the sav'ry table sitting,
She gleans his meal, the rest unwitting,
How she, their open eyes deceiving,
So dext'rous has become in thieving.
She tells, how, of some trifle prating,
She stirs them all to keen debating,
While into napkin'd lap she's sliding
Her portion, oft renew'd, and hiding,

Beneath the board, her store; amazing
Her jealous Frere, oft on her gazing.
Then with his voice and eager eye,
She speaks in harmless mimickry.
"Mother! was e'er the like beheld?
"Some wolf possesses our Griseld;
"She clears her dish, as I'm a sinner!
"Like plowman at his new-year's dinner."

XX.

And what each urchin, one by one,
Had best in sport or lesson done,
She fail'd not to repeat:
Tho' sorry tales they might appear
To a fastidious critic's ear,
They were to him most sweet.

XXI.

But they must part till o'er the sky
Night cast again her sable dye;
For ah! her term is almost over!
How fleetly hath it flown!
As fleetly as with tristed lover
The stealthy hour is gone.
And could there be in lovers' meeting
More powerful chords to move the mind,
Fond heart to heart responsive beating,
Than in that tender hour, pure, pious love entwined?

XXII.

Thus, night succeeding night, her love
Did its unwearied nature prove,
Tender and fearless; till, obscured by crimes,
Again so darkly lower'd the changeful times,
That her good sire, tho' shut from light of day,
Might in that lowly den no longer stay.

XXIII.

From Edinbrough town a courier came,
And round him flock'd the castle's dame,
Children and servants, young and old.
"What news? what news? thy visage sad
"Betrays too plainly tidings bad."
And so it did; alas! sad was the tale he told.
"From the oppressor's deadly hate
"Good Jerviswood has met his fate
"Upon the lofty scaffold, where
"He bore himself with dauntless air;
"Albeit, with mortal sickness spent,
"Upon a woman's arm he leant.
"From earth to heaven at yestere'en he went."

XXIV.

In silence deep the list'ners stood,
An instant horrour chill'd their blood.
The lady groan'd, and turn'd aside
Her fears and troubled thoughts to hide.
The children wept, then went to play;
The servants cried "Awaladay!"
But oh! what inward sights, which borrow
The forms that are not, changing still,
Like shadows on a broken rill,
Were blended with our damsel's sorrow!
Those lips, those eyes so sweetly mild,
That bless'd her as a humble child;
The block in sable, deadly trim,
The kneeling form, the headsman grim,
The sever'd head with life-blood streaming,—
Were ever 'thwart her fancy gleaming.
Her father, too, in perilous state,
He may be seiz'd, and like his friend
Upon the fatal scaffold bend.
May Heaven preserve him still from such a dreadful end!
And then she thought, if this must be,
Who, honour'd sire, will wait on thee,
And serve thy wants with decent pride,
Like Baillie's kinswoman, subduing fear
With fearless love, thy last sad scene to cheer,
Ev'n on the scaffold standing by thy side?
A friend like his, dear father, thou shalt have,
To serve thee to the last, and linger round thy grave.

XXV.

Her father then, who narrowly
With life escaped, was forced to fly
His dangerous home, a home no more,
And cross the sea. A friendly shore
Receiv'd the fugitive, and there,
Like prey broke from the spoiler's snare,
To join her hapless lord, the dame
With all her num'rous fam'ly came;
And found asylum, where th' opprest
Of Scotland's patriot sons had rest,
Like sea-fowl clust'ring in the rock
To shun some rising tempest's shock.

XXVI.

But said I all the fam'ly? no:
Word incorrect! it was not so:
For one, the youngest child, confin'd
With fell disease, was left behind;
While certain things, as thus by stealth
They fled, regarding worldly wealth
Of much import, were left undone;
And who will now that peril run,
Again to visit Scotland's shore,
From whence they did in fear depart,
And to each parent's yearning heart
The darling child restore?

XXVII.

And who did for affection's sake
This task of peril undertake?
O! who but she, whose bosom swell'd
With feelings high, whose self-devotion
Follow'd each gen'rous, strong emotion,
The young, the sweet, the good, the brave Griseld.

XXVIII.

Yes; she again cross'd o'er the main,
And things of moment left undone,
Tho' o'er her head had scarcely run
Her nineteenth year, no whit deluded
By wily fraud, she there concluded,
And bore the youngling to its own again.

XXIX.

But when she reach'd the Belgian strand,
Hard was her lot. Fast fell the rain,

And there lay many miles of land,
A stranger's land, ere she might gain
The nearest town. With hardship crost,
The wayward child its shoes had lost;
Their coin was spent, their garments light,
And dark and dreary was the night.
Then like some gypsie girl on desert moor,
Her helpless charge upon her back she bore.
Who then had guess'd that figure slight,
So bending in such humble plight,
Was one of proud and gentle race,
Possessing all that well became
Th' accomplish'd maid or high-born dame,
Befitting princely hall or monarch's court to grace?

XXX.

Their minds from many racking cares reliev'd,
The gladsome parents to their arms receiv'd
Her and the infant dear, caressing
The twain by turns; while many a blessing,
Which sweetly all her toil repaid,
Was shed upon their gen'rous maid:
And tho' the inmates of a humble home,
To which they had as wretched outlaws come,
Tho' hard their alter'd lot might be,
In crowded city pent,
They lived with mind and body free
In grateful, quiet content.

XXXI.

And well, with ready hand and heart,
Each task of toilsome duty taking,
Did one dear inmate play her part,
The last asleep, the earliest waking.
Her hands each nightly couch prepared,
And frugal meal on which they fared:
Unfolding spread the servet white,
And deck'd the board with tankard bright.
Thro' fretted hose and garment rent,
Her tiny needle deftly went,
Till hateful penury, so graced,
Was scarcely in their dwelling traced.
With rev'rence to the old she clung,
With sweet affection to the young.
To her was crabbed lesson said,
To her the sly petition made,
To her was told each petty care;
By her was lisp'd the tardy prayer,
What time the urchin, half undrest
And half asleep, was put to rest.

XXXII.

There is a sight all hearts beguiling.—
A youthful mother to her infant smiling,
Who, with spread arms and dancing feet,
And cooing voice, returns its answer sweet.
Who does not love to see the grandame mild,
Lesson with yearning looks the list'ning child?
But 'tis a thing of saintlier nature,
Amidst her friends of pigmy stature,
To see the maid in youth's fair bloom,
A guardian sister's charge assume,
And, like a touch of angel's bliss,
Receive from each its grateful kiss.—
To see them, when their hour of love is past,
Aside their grave demeanour cast.
With her in mimick war they wrestle;
Beneath her twisted robe they nestle;
Upon her glowing cheek they revel,
Low bended to their tiny level;
While oft, her lovely neck bestriding
Crows some arch imp, like huntsman riding.
This is a sight the coldest heart may feel:—
To make down rugged cheeks the kindly tear to steal.

XXXIII.

But when the toilsome sun was set,
And ev'ning groups together met,
(For other strangers shelter'd there
Would seek with them to lighten care,)
Her feet still in the dance mov'd lightest,
Her eye with merry glance beam'd brightest,
Her braided locks were coil'd the neatest,
Her carol song was thrill'd the sweetest;
And round the fire, in winter cold,
No archer tale than hers was told.

XXXIV.

O! spirits gay, and kindly heart!
Precious the blessings ye impart!
Tho' all unwittingly the while,
Ye make the pining exile smile,
And transient gladness charm his pain,
Who ne'er shall see his home again.
Ye make the stern misanthrope's brow
With tint of passing kindness glow,
And age spring from his elbow-chair
The sport of lightsome glee to share.
Thus did our joyous maid bestow
Her beamy soul on want and woe;
While proud, poor men, in thread-bare suit,
Frisk'd on the floor with lightsome foot,
And from her magic circle chace
The fiends that vex the human race.

XXXV.

And do not, gentle reader, chide,
If I record her harmless pride,
Who sacrificed the hours of sleep,
Some show of better times to keep;
That, tho' as humble soldier dight,
A stripling brother might more trimly stand
With pointed cuff and collar white,
Like one of gentle race mix'd with a homelier band.
And in that band of low degree
Another youth of gentle blood
Was found, who late had cross'd the sea,
The son of virtuous Jerviswood,
Who did as common sentry wait
Before a foreign prince's gate.
And if his eye, oft on the watch,
One look of sweet Griseld might catch,
It was to him no dull nor irksome state.

XXXVI.

And thus some happy years stole by;
Adversity with Virtue mated,
Her state of low obscurity,
Set forth but as deep shadows, fated
By Heaven's high will to make the light
Of future skies appear more bright.

And thus, at lowest ebb, man's thoughts are oft elated.
He deems not that the very struggle
Of active virtue, and the war
She bravely holds with present ill,
Sustain'd by hope, does by the skill
Of some conceal'd and happy juggle,
Become itself the good which yet seems distant far.
So, when their lamp of fortune burn'd
With brightest ray, our worthies turn'd,
A recollection, fondly bent,
On these, their happiest years, in humble dwelling spent.

XXXVII.

At length the sky, so long with clouds o'ercast,
Unveil'd its cope of azure hue,
And gave its fair expanse to view;—
The pelting storm of tyranny was past.

XXXVIII.

For he, the Prince of glorious memory,
The Prince, who shall, as passing ages fly,
Be blest; whose wise, enlighten'd, manly mind,
Ev'n when but with a stripling's years combin'd,
Had with unyielding courage oft contended
For Europe's freedom,—for religion, blended
With just, forbearing charity, and all
To man most dear;—now, at the honour'd call
Of Britain's patriot sons, the ocean plow'd
With gallant fleet, encompassed by a crowd
Of soldiers, statesmen, souls of proof, who vow'd
Firm by his side to stand, let good or ill befall.
And with those worthies, 'twas a happy doom.
Right fairly earn'd, embark'd, Sir Patrick Hume.
Their fleet, tho' long at sea, and tempest-tost,
In happy hour at last arrived on England's coast.

XXXIX.

Meantime his Dame and our fair Maid
Still on the coast of Holland stay'd,
With anxious and misgiving minds,
List'ning the sound of warring winds:
The ocean rose with deaf'ning roar,
And beat upon the trembling shore,
Whilst breakers dash'd their whit'ning spray
O'er mound and dyke with angry bray,
As if it would engulph again
The land once rescued from its wild domain.

XL.

Oft on the beach our Damsel stood
Midst groups of many a fearful Wight,
Who viewed, like her, the billowy flood,
Silent and sad, with visage shrunk and white,
While bloated corse and splinter'd mast,
And bale and cask on shore were cast,—
A sad and rueful sight!
But when, at the Almighty will,
The tempest ceas'd, and sea was still,
From Britain's isle glad tidings came,
Received with loud and long acclaim.

XLI.

But joy appears with shrouded head
To those who sorrow o'er the dead;
For, struck with sore disease, while there
They tarried pent in noisome air,
The sister of her heart, whom she
Had watch'd and tended lovingly,
Like blighted branch whose blossoms fade,
That day was in her coffin laid.
She heard the chimed bells loudly ringing,
She heard the carol'd triumph singing,
And clam'rous throng, and shouting boys,
And thought how vain are human joys!

XLII.

Howbeit, her grief at length gives way
To happier thoughts, as dawns the day
When her kind parent and herself depart,
In royal Mary's gentle train,
To join, ere long, the dearest to her heart,
In their own native land again.
They soon their own fair island hail'd,
As on the rippling sea they sail'd.
Ye well may guess their joyful cry,
With up-raised hands and glist'ning eye,
When, rising from the ocean blue,
Her chalky cliffs first met their view,
Whose white verge on th' horizon rear'd,
Like wall of noon-day clouds appear'd.

XLIII.

These ye may guess, for well the show
And outward signs of joy we know.
But cease we on this theme to dwell,
For pen or pencil cannot tell
The thrill of keen delight from which they flow.
Such moments of extatic pleasure
Are fancy's fairest, brightest treasure,
Gilding the scope of duller days
With oft-recurring retrospect,
With which right happily she plays.
Ev'n as a moving mirror will reflect
Its glancing rays on shady side
Of holme or glen, when school-boys guide
With skilful hands their mimick sun
To heaven's bright sun opposed; we see
Its borrow'd sheen on fallow dun,
On meadow green, on rock and tree,
On broomy steep, on rippling spring,
On cottage thatch, and every thing.

XLIV.

And Britain's virtuous Queen admired
Our gentle Maid, and in her train
Of ladies will'd her to remain:
What more could young ambition have desired?
But, like the blossom to the bough,
Or wall-flower to the ruin's brow,
Or tendril to the fost'ring stock,
Or sea-weed on the briny rock,

Or misletoe to sacred tree,
Or daisy to the swarded lea,
So truly to her own she clung;—
Nor cared for honours vain, from courtly favour sprung.

XLV.

Nor would she in her native North,
When woo'd by one of wealth and worth,
The neighbour of her happy home,
Tho' by her gentle parents press'd
And flatter'd, courted and caress'd,
A splended bride become.
"I may not," said her gentle heart,
"The very thought endure,
"That those so kind should feel the smart
"A daughter's wants might oft impart,
"For Jerviswood is poor.
"But yet, tho' poor, why should I smother
"This dear regard? he'll be my brother,
"And thus thro' life we'll love each other,
"What tho', as changing years flit by.
"Grey grow my head, and dim his eye!
"We'll meekly bear our wayward fate,
"And scorn their petty spite who rate,
"With senseless gibes, the single state,
"Till we are join'd, at last, in heavenly bliss on high."

XLVI.

But Heaven for them decreed a happier lot:
The father of the virtuous youth,
Who died devoted for the truth,
Was not, when better times return'd, forgot:
To the right heir was given his father's land,
And with his lady's love, he won her hand.

XLVII.

Their long-tried faith in honour plighted,
They were a pair by Heaven united,
Whose wedded love, thro' lengthen'd years,
The trace of early fondness wears.
Her heart first guess'd his doubtful choice,
Her ear first caught his distant voice,
And from afar, her wistful eye
Would first his graceful form descry.
Ev'n when he hied him forth to meet
The open air in lawn or street,
She to her casement went,
And after him, with smile so sweet,
Her look of blessing sent.
The heart's affection,—secret thing!
Is like the cleft rock's ceaseless spring,
Which free and independent flows
Of summer rains or winter snows.
The fox-glove from its side may fall
The heath-bloom fade or moss-flower white,
But still its runlet, bright tho' small,
Will issue sweetly to the light.

XLVIII.

How long an honour'd and a happy pair,
They held their seemly state in mansion fair,
I will not here in chiming verses say,
To tire my reader with a lengthen'd lay;
For tranquil bliss is as a summer day
O'er broad Savanna shining; fair it lies,
And rich the trackless scene, but soon our eyes,
In search of meaner things, turn heavily away.

XLIX.

But no new ties of wedded life,
That bind the mother and the wife,
Her tender, filial heart could change,
Or from its earliest friends estrange.
The child, by strong affection led,
Who brav'd her terror of the dead
To save an outlaw'd parent, still
In age was subject to his will.
She then was seen with matron air,
A Dame of years, with count'nance fair,
Tho' faded, sitting by his easy chair.
A sight that might the heart's best feelings move!
Behold her seated at her task of love!
Books, papers, pencil, pen, and slate,
And column'd scrolls of ancient date,
Before her lie, on which she looks
With searching glance, and gladly brooks
An irksome task, that else might vex
His temper, or his brain perplex;
While, haply, on the matted floor,
Close nestling at her kirtled feet,
Its lap enrich'd with childish store,
Sits, hush'd and still, a grandchild sweet,
Who looks at times with eye intent,
Full on its grandame's parent bent,
Viewing his deeply-furrowed brow,
And sunken lip and locks of snow,
In serious wonderment.
Well said that graceful sire, I ween!
Still thro' life's many a varied scene,
Griseld our dear and helpful child hath been.

L.

Tho' ever cheerfully possessing
In its full zest the present blessing,
Her grateful heart remembrance cherish'd
Of all to former happiness allied,
Nor in her fost'ring fancy perish'd
Ev'n things inanimate that had supplied
Means of enjoyment once. Maternal love,
Active and warm, which nothing might restrain,
Led her once more, in years advanced, to rove
To distant southern climes, and once again
Her footsteps press'd the Belgian shore,
The town, the very street that was her home of yore

LI.

Fondly that homely house she eyed,
The door, the windows, every thing
Which to her back-cast thoughts could bring
The scenes of other days.—Then she applied
To knocker bright her thrilling hand,
And begg'd, as strangers in the land,
Admittance from the household Dame,
And thus preferr'd her gentle claim:
"This house was once my happy home,
"Its rooms, its stair, I fain would see;
"Its meanest nook is dear to me,
"Let me and mine within its threshold come."
But no; this might not be!
Their feet might soil her polish'd floor,
The Dame held fast the hostile door,
A Belgian housewife she

"Fear not such harm! we'll doff our shoes:
"Do not our earnest suit refuse!
"We'll give thee thanks, we'll give thee gold;
"Do not kind courtesy withhold!"
But still it might not be;
The dull unpliant Dame refus'd her gentle plea.

LII.

With her and her good lord, who still
Sweet union held of mated will,
Years pass'd away with lightsome speed;
But ah! their bands of bliss at length were riven;
And she was cloth'd in widow's sable weed,
Submitting to the will of Heaven.
And then a prosp'rous race of children good
And tender, round their noble mother stood.
And she the while, cheer'd with their pious love,
Waited her welcome summons from above.

LIII.

But whatsoe'er the weal or woe
That Heaven across her lot might throw,
Full well her Christian spirit knew
Its path of virtue, straight and true.
When came the shock of evil times, menacing
The peaceful land—when blood and lineage tracing
As the sole claim to Britain's throne, in spite
Of Britain's weal or will, Chiefs of the North,
In warlike muster, led their clansmen forth,
Brave, faithful, strong and toughly nerved,
Would they a better cause had served!
For Stuart's dynasty to fight,
Distress to many a family came,
Who dreaded more th' approaching shame
Of penury's ill-favour'd mien,
Than ev'n the pang of hunger keen.
How softly then her pity flow'd!
How freely then her hand bestow'd!
She did not question their opinion
Of party, kingship, or dominion·
She would not ev'n their folly chide,
But like the sun and showers of heaven,
Which to the false and true are given,
Want and distress reliev'd on either side

LIV.

But soon, from fear of future change,
The evil took a wider range.
The Northern farmers, spoil'd and bare,
No more could rent or produce spare
To the soil's lords. All were distress'd,
And on our Noble Dame this evil sorely press'd.
Her household numerous, her means withheld:
Shall she her helpless servants now dismiss
To rob or starve, in such a time as this,
Or wrong to others do? But nothing quell'd
Her calm and upright mind.—"Go, summon here
"Those who have serv'd me many a year"
The summons went; each lowly name
Full swiftly to her presence came,
And thus she spoke: "Ye've served me long,
"Pure, as I think, from fraud or wrong,
"And now, my friendly neighbours, true
"And simply I will deal with you.
"The times are shrew'd, my treasures spent,
"My farms have ceas'd to yield me rent;
"And it may chance that rent or grain
"I never shall receive again.
"The dainties which my table fed,
"Will now be changed for daily bread,
"Dealt sparely, and for this I must
"Be debtor to your patient trust,
"If ye consent."—Swift thro' the hall,
With eager haste, spoke one and all.
"No, noble Dame! this must not be:
"With heart as warm and hand as free,
"Still thee and thine we'll serve with pride,
"As when fair fortune graced your side.
"The best of all our stores afford
"Shall daily smoke upon thy board;
"And, should'st thou never clear the score,
"Heaven for thy sake will bless our store."
She bent her head with courtesy,
The big tear swelling in her eye,
And thank'd them all. Yet plain and spare,
She order'd still her household fare,
Till fortune's better dye was cast,
And adverse times were past.

LV.

Good, tender, gen'rous, firm and sage,
Thro' grief and gladness, shade and sheen,
As fortune changed life's motley scene,
Thus pass'd she on to rev'rend age.
And when the heavenly summons came,
Her spirit from its mortal frame
And weight of mortal cares to free,
It was a blessed sight to see.
The parting saint her state of honour keeping
In gifted dauntless faith whilst round her, weeping,
Her children's children mourn'd on bended knee.

LVI.

In London's fair imperial town
She laid her earthly burthen down.
In Mellerstain, her northern home,
Was rais'd for her a graven tomb
Which gives to other days her modest, just renown.

And now, ye polish'd fair of modern times,
If such indeed will listen to my rhymes,
What think ye of her simple, modest worth,
Whom I have faintly tried to shadow forth?
How vain the thought! as if ye stood in need
For pattern ladies in dull books to read.
Will she such antiquated virtues prize,
Who with superb Signoras proudly vies,
Trilling before the dear admiring crowd
With out-stretch'd straining throat, bravuras loud,
Her high-heav'd breast press'd hard, as if to boast
The inward pain such mighty efforts cost

Or on the white-chalk'd floor, at midnight hour,
Her head with many a flaunting full-blown flower
And bartisan of braided locks enlarged,
Her flimsy gown with twenty flounces charg-ed,
Wheels gaily round the room on pointed toe,
Softly supported by some *dandy* beau:—
Will she, forsooth! or any belle of spirit,
Regard such old, forgotten, homely merit?
Or she, whose cultur'd, high-strain'd talents soar
Thro' all th' ambitious range of letter'd lore
With soul enthusiastic, fondly smitten
With all that e'er in classic page was written,
And whilst her wit in critic task engages,
The technic praise of all prais'd things out-rages;
Whose finger, white and small, with ink-stain tipt,
Still scorns with vulgar thimble to be clipt;
Who doth with proud pretence her claims advance
To philosophic, honour'd ignorance
Of all, that, in divided occupation,
Gives the base stamp of female degradation;
Protests she knows not colour, stripe nor shade,
Nor of what stuff her flowing robe is made,
But wears, from petty, friv'lous fancies free,
Whatever careful Betty may decree;
As certes, well she may, for Betty's skill
Leaves her in purfle, furbelow, or frill,
No whit behind the very costliest fair
That wooes with daily pains the public stare;
Who seems almost asham'd to be a woman,
And yet the palm of parts will yield to no man,
But holds on battle-ground eternal wrangling,
The plainest case in mazy words entang-ling:—
Will she, I trow, or any kirtled sage,
Admire the subject of my artless page?
And yet there be of British fair, I know,
Who to this legend will some favour show
From kindred sympathy; whose life proceeds
In one unwearied course of gentle deeds,
And pass untainted thro' the earthly throng,
Like souls that to some better world belong.
Nor will I think, as sullen cynics do,
Still lib'ling present times, their number few.
Yea, leagued for good they act, a virtuous band,
The young, the rich, the loveliest of the land,
Who clothe the naked, and, each passing week,
The wretched poor in their sad dwelling seek,
Who, cheer'd and grateful, feebly press and bless
The hands which princes might be proud to kiss:—
Such will regard my tale, and give to fame
A generous helpful Maid,—a good and noble Dame.

NOTES.

Note I.

Is it a woman or a child?—P. 536.

She was at that time twelve years old, (see Lady Murray's Narrative.)—"When Mr. Baillie was first imprisoned, Sir Patrick sent his daughter Griseld to Edinburgh, with instructions to obtain admission unsuspectedly into the prison, to deliver a letter to Mr. Baillie, and bring back from him what intelligence she could. She succeeded in this difficult enterprise, and having at this time met with Mr. Baillie's son, the intimacy and friendship was formed which was afterwards completed by their marriage."

Note II.

What blessings on her youthful head
Were by the grateful patriot shed,
For such he was—P. 536.

(See the Appendix.)

Note III.

Or in the grated prison's gloom,
Dealt to them by oppression's hateful hand,
Abide their final doom.—P. 536.

It made the persecution of the Calvinists in those days more intolerable to them, when they considered that it was no motives of conscience which actuated their persecutors, who were the servile agents of a tyrant, assuming zeal in his service from corrupting and worldly views; and that had the king changed the religion every half-year, they would have been equally zealous in persecuting the opposers of the established church for the time being.

Note IV.

With them who, in these times unblest,
Alone had sure and fearless rest,
The still, the cured dead.—P. 536.

"Sir Patrick Hume concealed himself in a burying-vault in Polworth church.—*Lady M's. Nar.*

"The frequent examination oaths put to servants, in order to make discoveries, were so strict, they durst not run the risk of trusting any of them."—"By the assistance of this man, a carpenter, who was the only person beside Lady Hume and Griseld who knew the place of his confinement, they got a bed and bed-clothes carried in the night to the burying-place, a vault under ground at Polworth church, a mile from the house, where he was concealed for a month, and had only for light an open slit at one end, through which nobody could see what was doing below. She (Lady Griseld) went every night by herself to carry him victuals and drink, and stayed with him as long as she could to get home before day."

NOTE V.

The very hounds went cowering by,
Or watch'd afar with howling moan,
For brutes will see what meets no human eye.
—P. 537.

This is a very general belief, particularly regarding dogs and horses. When the dog cowers by his master's side, or stops short on his way, and gives a stifled bark, it is something far more terrible than the skulking thief or robber, which the belated peasant apprehends to be near him.—"But have you never seen a ghost yourself?" was once my eager question to the sexton of the parish, who had been telling me many frightful stories of apparitions.—"No," answered he very seriously; "I never have, myself, but I am very sure that my dog has seen them."

NOTE VI.

I'll be his active Brownie sprite — P. 537.

After the many ingenious works which have brought into notice of late years our Scottish superstitions, it would be foolish to acquaint the reader with the nature and properties of a Brownie; I shall only say, that they are described by those who have been fortunate enough to get sight of them, as resembling a short square man, of a brown colour, and hairy. I once knew a woman, whose mother was the last person who saw a certain Brownie, long attached to a family of note in Lanrickshire; and, though she was so frightened at the sight, that she *swarf'd* (swooned) for fear, such was her description of him. One of those beings is often supposed to be attached to particular families, and to be occasional night-servants for several generations. Mr. Hogg, in his ingenious tale of the Brownie of Bodsbeck, accounts very plausibly for the frequent traditions of those supernatural labourers in Scotland; and in all countries where persecuted or outlawed men have subsisted on the secret bounty, or pilfered provisions of a neighbouring mansion, we may well suppose similar traditions to have existed; for wretched and persecuted men will be more inclined gratefully to repay what necessity has obliged them to take or receive, than those who are more happily circumstanced. The Lubber Fiend is mentioned by Milton, and, I believe, other poets. Fortunately, perhaps, for the reader, want of learning prevents me from tracing the matter further.

NOTE VII.

She clears her dish, as I'm a sinner!
Like ploughman at his new-year's dinner.—P. 538.

Lady M.'s Nar.—"There was also difficulty in getting food to carry him without the servants suspecting; the only way it was done was by stealing it off her plate at dinner into her lap: many a diverting story she has told about this and things of the like nature. Her father liked sheep's-head, and while the children were eating the broth, she had conveyed most of one into her lap; when her brother Sandy (the late Lord Marchmont) had done, he looked up with astonishment and said, "Mother, will you look at Griseld; while we have been eating our broth, she has eat up all the sheep's head!"

NOTE VIII.

Like Baillie's kinswoman, subduing fear.—P. 538.

See the Appendix. And Laing's Hist. book viii. page 139., where it is mentioned that his sister-in-law supported him to the scaffold.

NOTE IX.

Her father then, who narrowly
With life escaped, was forced to fly.—P. 538.

Lady M.'s Nar.—"Sir P. Hume, on hearing of the death of Jerviswood, fled from this country, and took refuge in Holland, where his wife and her large family joined him. My aunt Julian, the youngest child, was so ill that she could not go with them. My mother returned from Holland by herself, to bring her over and negociate business. * * * They landed at the Brill. From that they set out at night, on foot, with a gentleman, who was of great use to them, that came over at the same time to take refuge in Holland. It was a cold wet night: my aunt, a girl not well able to walk, soon lost her shoes in the dirt; my mother took her upon her back, and carried her the rest of the way, the gentleman carrying the small luggage."

NOTE X.

Who then had guess'd that figure slight.—P. 539.

Lady M.'s Nar.—"She was middle-sized, well made, and clever in her person; very handsome, with a life and sweetness in her eyes very uncommon, and great delicacy in all her features."

NOTE XI.

And well, with ready hand and heart,
Each task of toilsome duty taking.—P. 539.

Lady M.'s Nar.—"All the time they were there (Holland,) there was not a week my mother did not sit up two nights to do the business that was necessary. She went to the market, and the mill to have the corn ground, as was the way with good managers there; dressed the linen, cleaned the house, made ready dinner, mended the children's stockings, and other clothes, made what she could for them, and in short did every thing."

NOTE XII.

Her braided locks were coil'd the neatest,
Her coral song was trill'd the sweetest,
And round the fire, in winter cold,
No archer tale than hers was told.—P. 539.

She was very neat in her dress, sung well, and had a great deal of humour in telling a story, being of a very cheerful disposition. (See Lady M.'s Nar.)

NOTE XIII.

For other strangers, shelter'd there,
Would seek with them to lighten care.—P. 539.

The house of Sir Patrick Hume was much frequented by his countrymen, many of whom had taken refuge in Holland under similar circumstances with himself; and those meetings were enlivened with dancing and music, and all innocent amusements which cheerful poverty may enjoy.

NOTE XIV.

A stripling brother might more trimly stand,
With pointed cuff and collar white,
Like one of gentle race mixed with a homelier band.—P. 539.

Lady M. says, in her narrative, that her elder brother, for a time, was a private in the Prince of Orange's guards, as was also young Jerviswood, when she took such pains to have his cuffs and cravat pointed after the fashion of those days.

NOTE XV.

——————— *our worthies turn'd,*
A recollection, fondly bent
On these, their happiest years, in humble dwelling spent.—P. 540.

Lady M. records, that her mother talked of those years as the happiest part of her life.

NOTE XVI.

Still on the coast of Holland stayed,
With anxious and misgiving minds,
List'ning the sound of warring winds.—P. 540.

Lady M.'s Nar.—"When the long-expected happiness of the Prince's going to England took place, her father and brother, and my father, went with him. They (Griseld and lady Hume) soon heard the melancholy report of the whole fleet being cast away or dispersed, and immediately came from Utrecht to Herveit-Sluu, to get what information they could. The place was crowded by people from all quarters, come for the same purpose; so that her mother and she and her sister were forced to lie in the boat they came in, and for three days continually to see come floating in, beds, chests, horses, &c. that had been thrown overboard in their distress."

NOTE XVII.

But joy appears with shrouded head
To those who sorrow o'er the dead.—P. 540.

Lady M.'s Nar.—"Yet when that happy news (the Prince's safe arrival in England) came, it was no more to my mother than any occurrence she had not the least concern in, for that very day her sister Christian died of a sore throat, which was so sore an affliction to both her and her mother, that they had no feeling for any thing else."

NOTE XVIII.

Britain's virtuous Queen admired
Our gentle maid, and in her train
Of ladies will'd her to remain.—P. 540.

Lady M.'s Nar.—"My grandmother and she came over with the Princess. She was offered to be made one of her maids of honour, and was well qualified for it. * * * She declined being maid of honour, and chose going home with the rest of her family."

NOTE XIX.

But, like the blossom to the bough,
Or wall-flower to the ruin's brow.—P. 540.

I fear I have not here nor any where done justice to the sweetness and modesty of her character; for her daughter says of her, "She greatly disliked flattery. I have often seen her put out of countenance at speeches made to her, and had not a word to say. * * * And this was joined with a modesty which was singular. To her last, she had the bashfulness of a girl, and was as easily put out of countenance."

NOTE XX.

But yet, though poor, why should I smother
This dear regard? he'll be my brother.—P. 541.

Knowing that her parents objected to her union with Jerviswood, on account of his circumstances, she resolved never to marry.—(See Lady M.'s Nar.)

NOTE XXI.

She to her casement went,
And after him, with smile so sweet,
Her look of blessing sent.—P. 541.

Lady M. in speaking of her affection for her husband, says,—"To the last of his life she felt the same tender love and affection for him, and the same desire to please him in the smallest trifle, that she had at their first acquaintance. Indeed, her principal pleasure was to watch and attend to every thing that could give him pleasure or make him easy. He never went abroad but she went to the window to look after him."

NOTE XXII.

But no new ties of wedded life,
That bind the mother and the wife,
Her tender, filial heart could change.—P. 541.

When her father became very old, so that business became a trouble to him, we find it recorded by lady M., that Lady Griseld went to him once every year, or as often as was necessary, and looked over all his papers and accounts, which were often long and intricate. Very unlike too many married women, who, in taking upon them the duties of a wife and mother, suffer these to absorb every other; and visit their father's house seldom, and as a stranger who has nothing to do there but to be served and waited upon. If misfortune or disease come upon their parents, it is the single daughters only who seem to be concerned in all this.—She who is a neglectful daughter, is an attentive wife and mother from a mean cause.

NOTE XXIII.

Well said that grateful sire, I ween!
Griseld our dear and helpful child hath been.— P. 541.

This was the commendation which her mother gave her, upon her death-bed.

NOTE XXIV.

Fondly that homely house she eyed,
The door, the windows, every thing.—P. 541.

Lady M.'s Nar.—"When she came to Utrecht, the place of her former abode, she had the greatest pleasure in showing us every corner of the town, which seemed fresh in her memory, particularly the house she had lived in, which she had a great desire to see; but when she came there, they would not let her in, by no argument, either of words or money, for no reason but for fear of dirtying it; she offered to put off her shoes, but could not prevail, and she came away much mortified at her disappointment."

NOTE XXV.

How softly then her pity flowed!
How freely then her hand bestowed!—P. 542.

I have here fallen short of the liberality recorded by Lady Murray; for she says, that Lady Griseld gave to those distressed people of both parties as long as she had any money to give, and when that was exhausted, borrowed from others to relieve them. I have no reason to question this statement, and there were, no doubt, circumstances which permitted her to do so, consistently with the justice and good sense of her character; but as those circumstances are not mentioned, and if they were, would probably make very untoward matter for a metrical story, I have chosen rather to omit the full extent of her beneficence, than injure a young reader with giving him fantastical notions of generosity. Too many of our modern comedies have been, with the best intention in their authors, hurtful in this respect. But less, I believe, in making (as might be supposed) either young or old very imprudently or heedlessly liberal, than in teaching them to despise a reasonable liberality, as beneath a sentimental gentleman or lady; and, therefore, to omit the virtue altogether, unless it can be exercised with becoming occasions; which occasions, some how or other, never occur, or if they do, prove of so exhausting a nature that many reasonable and moderate calls on generosity pass afterwards unregarded.

NOTE XXVI.

But soon, from fear of future change,
The evil took a wider range.—P. 542.

Lady M., after mentioning her distress at the time of the rebellion in the year 1725, and her charity for those who differed with her in opinion, and liberality to all in distress, while it was in her power, adds: "When the situation of things made it impossible for her to get any money from Scotland, and what she had was at an end, she sent for her butcher, and baker, and brewer, &c. whom she regularly paid every month, told them she could not do so, and perhaps never might be able to pay them at all, of which she thought it just to give them warning, that they might choose whether they would continue to serve her: they all said she should be in no pain, but take from them whatever she had occasion for, because they were sure, if ever she was able to pay them, she would; and if she was not, she was very welcome, which was the least they owed for such long punctual payments as they had got from her."

NOTE XXVII.

Whilst round her, weeping,
Her children's children mourn'd on bended knee.—P. 542.

The friendly, affectionate terms on which she lived with her numerous offspring is often noticed by Lady M.; so that they had all good cause to lament her loss.

NOTE XXVIII.

Was raised for her a graven tomb
Which gives to other days her modest, just renown.—P. 542.

The inscription to her memory is written by Judge Burnet, and says, that,—

"While an infant,
At the hazard of her own, she preserved her father's life,
Who, under the persecution of ambitious power,
Sought refuge in the close confinement of a tomb.
Where he was nightly supplied with necessaries conveyed by her,
With a caution above her years,
A courage above her sex,
A real instance of the so much celebrated Roman charity."

NOTE XXIX.

Yea, leagued for good, there is a virtuous band,
The rich, the young, the loveliest of the land.— P. 543.

It is a very pleasing trait of the present times, that our women, particularly young women of the higher classes of society, are so actively benevolent. Many of them, associated with those of more experienced age, are to be found, who, like Sisters of Mercy, visit the abodes of want and misery in our great metropolis; dispensing their bounty, not thoughtlessly, to get rid of a painful sympathy, as casual charity is frequently bestowed, but with judicious and careful consideration. They join the manners of the world to the considerate methodical benevolence of the Society of Quakers; and how far, by example, we may be indebted to that society for this useful manner of doing good, it would not here be proper to inquire. There is an honoured name—a most distinguished woman belonging to that respectable sect, who may hereafter, in the hands of a better poet, become the subject of a lay more generally interesting, though less romantic, than that of the Lady Griseld Baillie.

APPENDIX.

CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS.

No. I.

Herrera's Hist. vol. i. page 21.—"Don Christopher Columbus, whom the Spaniards, for the more easy pronunciation, called Colon, was born in the city of Genoa, in which particular, as also that his father's name was Dominick, all who write or treat of him do agree, and he himself owns it; and as for his original, some say it was from Plasencia, and others from Cucureo, on the coast near the same city: but some say he was descended from the lords of the castle of Cucaro, which is that part of Italy formerly called Lyguria, now the dukedom of Montserrat, so near Alexandria de la Polla, that the bells are heard from the one to the other; but which was the most certain descent, was left to be decided by the supreme council of the Indies. It appears that the Emperor Otho the Second, in the year 940, confirmed to the Earls Peter, John, and Alexander Columbus, the lands they held as fiefs, and in fee simple, within the liberties of the cities of Acqui, Savonna, Aste, Monferrat, Turin, Vercelli, Parma, Cremona, and Bergano, and all their other possessions in Italy; and it further appears by other deeds, that the Columbi of Cucaro, Cucureo, and Plasencia, were the same; and that the aforesaid Emperor, the same year, 940, granted to the said brothers of the house of Columbus, Peter, John, and Alexander, the castles of Cucaro, Conzano, Rosignano, and others, and the fourth part of Bistagno, all which belonged to the empire, which is a testimony of the antiquity of this house.

No. II.

Herrera, vol. i. page 21.—"He came into Spain, and more particularly into Portugal, when he was very young.—And being very positive in the notion he had long conceived, that there were new lands, undiscovered, he resolved to make the same public; but being sensible that such an enterprize was only fit for great Princes, he first proposed it to the republic of Genoa, which looked upon it as a dream; and after that to King John of Portugal, who, though he gave him a favourable hearing, being then taken up with the discovery of the coast of Africk on the ocean, did not think fit to undertake so many things at once, and yet referred it to Doctor Calzadillo, called Don Diego Ortiz, Bishop of Ceuta, who was a Castilian, born at Calzadillo, and to Master Rodrigo and Jusepe, Jewish physicians, to whom he gave credit in affairs of discoveries and cosmography; and, though they affirmed they looked upon it as a fabulous notion, having heard Don Christopher Columbus, and understood the motives he had, and what course he designed to steer, not altogether rejecting the project, they advised him to send a caravel, upon pretence of sailing to Cabo Verde, to endeavour to find by that course Don Christopher proposed to discover the secret; but that vessel, having been many days out at sea, and in great storms, returned without finding any thing, making a jest of Columbus's project, who was not ignorant of this attempt.

"This action very much troubled Columbus: and he took such an aversion to Portugal, that, being rid of his wife, who was dead, he resolved to go away into Spain; and, for fear of being served as he had been in Portugal, he was resolved to send his brother, Don Bartholomew Columbus, into England, where Henry the Seventh then reigned. He was a long time on his way, having been taken by pirates, and staid there to be acquainted with the humours of the court, and the method of managing affairs. Don Christopher, designing to propose that affair to their Catholic Majesties, Ferdinand and Elizabeth, (Herrera here calls this queen Elizabeth,) in the year 1484, privately made his way to Portugal by sea, toward Andaluzia, being satisfied that the king was convinced that his project was well-grounded, and that those who went in the caravel had not performed what he expected of them, and therefore designed to attempt that affair again. He arrived at Palos de Moquer, whence he went away to the court, which was then at Cordova. * * * He began to propose his affair at Cordova, where the most encouragement he found was in Alonzo de Quintanilla, controller of the revenue of Castile, a very discreet man, and who delighted in great undertakings; who, looking upon Columbus as a man of worth, gave him maintenance, without which he could not have subsisted so long in that tedious suit, which was so home pressed, that their Catholic Majesties, giving some attention to the affair, referred it to Father Ferdinand de Talavery, of the order of St. Jerome, Prior of Prado, and the Queen's confessor, who was afterwards the first Bishop of Granada. He held an assembly of cosmographers, who debated about it; but there being few of that profession in Castile, and those none of the best in the world, and, besides, Columbus would not altogether explain himself, lest he should be served as he had been in Portugal, they came to a resolution nothing answerable to what he had expected; some alleging that since, during so many ages as there were from the creation of the world, men so well versed

in marine affairs had known nothing of those countries Columbus persuaded them must be found, it was not to be imagined that he could know more than all of them; others, adhering more to cosmographical reasons, urged, that the world was so large that there would be no coming to the utmost extent of the east in three years' sail, whither Columbus said he intended his voyage; and, in confirmation thereof, they alleged that Seneca, by way of dispute, said, that many discreet men did not agree upon the question, whether the ocean were infinite, and doubted whether it could be sailed, and supposing it to be navigable, whether there was any country inhabited on the other side, and whether it was possible to go to it they added, that no part of this inferior sphere was inhabited, except only a small compass which was left in our hemisphere above the water, and that all the rest was sea; and that notwithstanding it were so, that it were possible to arrive at the extreme part of the East, it would be also granted, that from Spain they go to the extreme part of the West."

Herrera, in the following chapter to the above, says, "There were also others who affirmed, that if Columbus should sail away directly westward, he would not be able to return to Spain, by reason of the roundness of the globe; because, whosoever should go beyond the hemisphere known by Ptolemy, would fall down so low, that it would be impossible ever to return, by reason it would be like climbing up a hill; and though Columbus fully answered these arguments, they could not comprehend him; for which reason those of the assembly judged the enterprize to be vain and impracticable, and that it was not becoming the grandeur of such mighty Princes to proceed upon so imperfect an account.

"After much delay, their Catholic Majesties ordered this answer to be given to Columbus, that being engaged in several wars, particularly in the conquest of Granada, they could not enter upon fresh expenses, but when that was over, they would cause further inquiry to be made into his proposals, and so dismissed him. * * Having received the answer above, Columbus went away to Sevil, very melancholy and discontented, after having been five years at court to no effect. He caused the affair to be proposed to the Duke de Medina Sidonia, and, some say, to the Duke de Medina Celi at the same time; and they also rejecting him, he writ to the King of France, designing to go over to England to look for his brother, of whom he had heard nothing for a long time, in case the French would not employ him. With this design he went to the monastery for his son Don Diego, in order to leave him at Cordova; and communicating his design to Father John Perez de Marchena, God having reserved this discovery for the crown of Castile and Leon, and Columbus was going unwillingly to treat with other princes, of because, by reason of the long time he had lived in Spain he looked upon himself as a Spaniard, he put off his journey at the request of Father John Periz, who, to be the better informed of the grounds Columbus went upon, sent for Garci Hernandez, a physician, and they three conferred together upon what Columbus proposed, which gave Garci Hernandez, as being a philosopher, much satisfaction. Whereupon Father John Perez, who was known to the Queen, as having confessed her sometimes, writ to her, and she ordered him to come to court, which was then in the town of Santa Fé, at the siege of Granada, and to leave Columbus at Palos, giving him hopes of success in his business. Father John Perez having been with the Queen, she ordered twenty thousand maravedies in florins to be sent to Columbus by James Prieto, an inhabitant of Palos, for him to go to court; where he being come, the affair began to be canvassed again. But the prior of Prado, and others who followed them, being of a contrary opinion, and Columbus demanding very high terms, and, among the rest, to have the title of Admiral and Viceroy, they thought he demanded too much, if the enterprize succeeded, and looked upon it as a discredit, if it did not; whereupon the treaty entirely ceased, and Columbus resolved to go away to Cordova, in order to proceed from thence to France, being positive not to go to Portugal upon any account.

"Alonzo de Quintanilla, and Lewis de Santangel, a clerk of the revenue of the crown of Arragon, were much concerned to think that this enterprize should be disappointed. Now, at the request of Father John Perez, and Alonzo de Quintanilla, the Cardinal Don Pedro Gonzalez de Mendoza had heard Columbus, and looking upon him as a grave man, he had an esteem for him * * * In January, 1492, he set out from Santa Fe for Cordova, in great anguish, the city of Granada being then in possession of their Catholic Majesties. The same day, Lewis de Santangel told the Queen, he wondered that she, who had never wanted spirit for the greatest undertakings, should now fail, where so little could be lost, and so much might be gained; for, in case the affair succeeded, and fell into the hands of another Prince, as Columbus affirmed it was like to do in case Spain would not accept of it, she might guess how prejudicial it would be to her crown; and since Columbus appeared to be a discreet man, and demanded no reward but out of what he should find, and was willing to defray a part of the charge, venturing his own person also, the thing ought not to be looked upon as altogether so impracticable, as the cosmographers said, nor be reckoned as lightness to have attempted such a mighty enterprize, though it should prove unsuccessful, inasmuch as it became great and generous monarchs to be acquainted with the wonders and secrets of the world, by which other Princes have gained everlasting renown; besides, that Colum-

bus demanded only a million of maravedies to fit him out; and therefore he intreated her not to suffer the apprehension of so small an expense to disappoint so great an enterprize.

"The Queen, finding herself importuned on the same account by Alonzo de Quintanilla, who was much in credit with her, thanked them for their advice, and said, she accepted it, provided they would stay till she could recover a little from the expense of the war; however, if they thought it should be immediately put into execution, she would consent that they should borrow what money was requisite upon some of her jewels. Quintanilla and Santangel kissed her hands, for that she had at their request resolved to do what she had refused to so many others, and Lewis de Santangel offered to lend as much of his own as was necessary. Upon this resolution, the queen ordered an Alguazil of the court to go post after Columbus, and to tell him from her, that she commanded him to return, and to bring him away. The Alguazil overtook him two leagues from Granada, at the bridge of Pinos, and though much concerned for the small regard shown him, he returned to Santa Fe, where he was received, and the secretary John Coloma was ordered to draw up conditions and dispatches, after he had spent eight years inculcating the enterprize, and enduring many crosses and hardships."

No. III.

Herrera, vol. i. page 45.—"It pleased God in his mercy, at the time when Don Christopher Columbus could no longer withstand so much muttering, contradiction and contempt, that on Thursday the 11th of October, of the aforesaid year 1492, in the afternoon, he received some comfort by the manifest tokens they perceived of their being near land; for the men aboard the Admiral saw a green rush near the ship, and next a large green fish, of those that keep close to the rocks. Those aboard the caravel Pinta saw a cane and a staff, and took up one that was artificially wrought, and a little board, and saw abundance of weeds, fresh torn off the shore. Those aboard the caravel Nina saw other such like tokens, and a branch of a thorn with the berries on it which appeared to be newly broken off; for which reasons, and because they brought up sand on sounding, there was a certainty of their being near land, which was confirmed by the shifting of the winds, which seemed to come from shore. Columbus, being satisfied that he was near land, after night-fall, when they had said the Antiphon, *Salve Regina*, as is usual among the sailors every night, he discoursed the men, telling them, how merciful God had been to them, carrying them safe so long a voyage; and that, since the tokens were hourly more manifest, he desired them to watch all night, since they knew that, in the first article of the instructions he had given them when they came out of Spain, he told them, that when they had run seven hundred leagues without discovering land, they were to lie after midnight till day and be upon the watch, for he firmly confided that they would find land that night, and that, besides the ten thousand maravedies' annuity their Highnesses had promised the person that should first discover it, he would give a velvet doublet. Two hours before midnight, Columbus, standing on the poop, he saw a light, and privately called Peter Gutierres, groom of the privy-chamber to the King," [it appears from this that the crew had not been on the watch as he desired them,] "and bid him look at it, and he answered he saw it. Then they called Roderick Sanchez of Segovia purser of the fleet, who could not discern it; but afterwards it was seen twice and looked like a little candle, &c. * * * Two hours after midnight, the caravel Pinta being always a-head, it made signs of land, which was first discovered by a sailor whose name was Roderick de Triana, but two leagues distant. But their Catholic Majesties declared that the ten thousand maravedies' annuities belonged to the Admiral, and it was always paid him at the shambles of Sevil, because he saw the light amidst the darkness, meaning the spiritual light that was then coming into those barbarous people: God so ordered it, that when the war with the Moors was ended, after they had been seven hundred and twenty years in Spain, this work should be taken in hand, to the end that the kings of Castile and Leon should be always employed in bringing infidels over to the light of the Catholic faith."

No. IV.

"When all things were ready, and he was upon the point of departing, he called them together, and spoke to them to this effect:—'He bid them offer up their prayers to God, and return thanks to him for having carried them to such a country to plant his holy faith, and not forsake him, but to live like good Christians, and he would protect them. That they should pray to God to grant him a good voyage, that he might soon return to them with a greater power; that they should love and obey their captain, because it was requisite for their own preservation, and he charged them so to do in the name of their Highnesses. That they should respect Gaucanagari, and give no offence to any of his people, nor offer violence to man or woman, that the opinion of their coming from heaven might be confirmed. That they should not part nor go up the country, nor out of Gaucanagari's dominions, since he loved them so well, that with his consent they should survey the coast in canoes and their boat, endeavouring to discover gold mines, and some good harbour, because he was not well pleased with that where they remained, which he called the Nativity; that they should endeavour to barter the most they could fairly, without showing covetousness; and endeavour to learn the language, since it would be so useful to them, since they had

opened the way to that new world.' They answered they would punctually perform all he ordered them. Wednesday, the 2d of January, 1493, he went ashore to take his leave, dined with Gaucanagari and his Caziques, recommended the Christians to him, whom he had commanded to serve and defend him from the Caribes. He gave him a fine shirt, and said, he would soon return with presents from the king of Spain. He answered with great tokens of sorrow for his departure."

No. V.

Herrera, vol. i. page 125, having related how the Admiral founded a colony at Isabella, in the island of Hispaniola, left it for a time to build a fort in another part of the country, and after a time returned to it again, when he found many of the settlers dead, and the rest suffering from sickness and want of provisions, proceeds in these words:—"He found the men much fatigued, many of them dead, and those who were in health very disconsolate for fear they should not long survive, and they sickened the faster as the provisions declined. * * * Being thus out of hopes of any relief, starving with hunger, and sick, many of them persons of distinction, who had never undergone such hardships, they died very impatient and almost desperate; and therefore, after this colony of Isabella was abandoned, it was reported that dreadful cries were heard in that place, so that people durst not go that way. It was positively affirmed, that two men passing along among the buildings of the Isabella, there appeared to them in the street, two ranks of men very well clad, their swords by their sides, with mufflers about their faces, as travellers used to wear at that time in Spain; and those two persons wondering to see such new-comers there, so well dressed, whereas there was no knowledge of them in the island, saluted them, and asked them when and from whence they came; the others returned no answer, but putting their hands to their hats, with them took off their head, and so vanished, which was such a surprise to the aforesaid two men, that they not to themselves in a long time after."

No. VI.

Herrera, vol. i. page 252, gives this account of the fate of Bovadilla:—"He (Columbus, from Spain) arrived there (Santo Domingo) the 29th of June, and sent Peter de Terreros, captain of a ship, to acquaint Nicholas de Obando with the necessity he was under of leaving that ship there, and to desire he would permit him to enter the port with his ships, not only to change or buy another, but also to shelter himself from a great storm he was sure would soon happen. Obando would not consent to it, and the Admiral being informed that the fleet of thirty-two sail was ready to put to sea, sent to advise him not to permit it to go out in eight days, because there would be a most dreadful tempest, for which reason he was going to put into the next harbour he should find, as accordingly he did to Puerto Hermoso, sixteen leagues from Santo Domingo. Nicholas de Obando would not believe it, and the pilots made a jest of it, calling him a prophet. Among many tokens of a storm observed by mariners, one is, the porpoises and other such like fishes playing upon the superficies of the water, from which and other observations the Admiral had concluded that there would be a storm.

"As soon as Obando arrived at Hispaniola, he put his orders in execution, and accordingly Francis de Bovidilla was sent aboard the fleet with Francis Roldan, and all the rest that had been concerned in his insurrection, as also the Cazique Gaurinoex, lord of the Vale Royal, one hundred thousand castellanos of gold, beside the above-mentioned vast grain of gold," (so large that they had dined off it instead of a table.) "and one hundred thousand more, belonging to passengers, at which time those two hundred thousand castellanos were worth more than two millions. The fleet, consisting of thirty-one ships, set sail about the beginning of July, and within forty hours there arose such a violent storm as had not been known in many years, so that twenty ships were cast away, and not a man saved, and all the town of Santo Domingo, which was then on the other side of the river, the houses being slight, was blown down. The Admiral's ships were dispersed and in the utmost danger, but met again in Puerto Hermoso, and thus the Admiral and his ships escaped, and the fleet perished because they would not believe him. There Francis de Bovadilla, who had sent the Admiral in irons to Spain, perished, as did Francis Roldan and his companions, who had rebelled against the King. The two hundred thousand castellanos of gold and the vast grain above mentioned, were also lost. The worst ship in the fleet, on board which the Admiral had four thousand pesos, escaped, and was the first that arrived in Spain."

No. VII.

Robertson's History of America, book iii. —"For a considerable time the supply of treasure from the New World was scanty and precarious, and the genius of Charles the Fifth conducted public measures with such prudence that the effects of this influence were little perceived. But when Philip the Second ascended the Spanish throne, with talents far inferior to those of his father, and remittances from the colonies became a regular and a considerable branch of revenue, the fatal operation of this rapid change in the state of the kingdom, both on the monarch and his people, was at once conspicuous. Philip, possessing the spirit of unceasing assiduity, which often characterizes the ambition of men of moderate talents, entertained such an opinion of his own resources, that he thought nothing too arduous for him to undertake. Shut up

himself in the solitude of the Escurial, he troubled and annoyed all the nations round him. He waged open war with the Dutch and English; he encouraged and aided a rebellious faction in France; he conquered Portugal, and maintained armies and garrisons in Italy, Africa, and both the Indies. By such a multiplicity of great and complicated operations, pursued with ardour during the course of a long reign, Spain was drained both of men and money!'

After mentioning the wretched impolicy of Philip the Third, in banishing the Moors from Spain, continuing the subject, he says:—

"In proportion as the population and manufactures of the parent state declined, the demands of her colonies continued to increase. The Spaniards, like their monarch, intoxicated with the wealth which poured in annually upon them, deserted the paths of industry to which they had been accustomed, and repaired with eagerness to those regions from which this opulence issued. By this rage of emigration, another drain was opened, and the strength of the colonies augmented by exhausting that of the mother-country. All those emigrants, as well as the adventurers, who had at first settled in America, depended absolutely on Spain for almost every article of necessary consumption. Engaged in more alluring and lucrative pursuits, or prevented by restraints which government imposed, they could not turn their own attention towards establishing the manufactures requisite to comfortable subsistence. They received their clothing, their furniture, whatever ministers to the ease or luxury of life, and even their instruments of labour, from Europe. Spain, thinned of people, and decreasing in industry, was unable to supply their growing demands. She had recourse to her neighbours. The manufactures of the low countries, of England, of France, and of Italy, which her wants called into existence, or animated with new vivacity, furnished in abundance whatever she required. * * In short, not above a twentieth part of the commodities exported to America were of Spanish growth or fabric: all the rest was the property of foreign merchants, though entered in the name of Spaniards. The treasure of the new world may be said henceforward not to have belonged to Spain. Before it reached Europe, it was anticipated as the price of goods purchased from foreigners. That wealth which, by internal circulation, would have spread through each vein of industry, and have conveyed life and movement to every branch of manufacture, flowed out of the kingdom with such a rapid course as neither enriched nor animated it. On the other hand, the artisans of other nations, encouraged by this quick sale of their commodities, improved so much in skill and industry as to be able to afford them at a rate so low, that the manufactures of Spain, which could not vie with theirs, either in quality or cheapness of work, were still more depressed. This destructive commerce drained off the riches of the nation faster and more completely than even the extravagant schemes of ambition carried on by its monarchs. Spain was so much astonished and distressed at beholding her American treasures vanish almost as soon as they were imported, that Philip the Third, unable to supply what was requisite in circulation, issued an edict, by which he endeavoured to raise copper money to a value in currency nearly equal to that of silver; and the Lord of Peruvian and Mexican mines was reduced to a wretched expedient, which is the last resource of petty impoverished states. * * * Spain early became sensible of her declensions from her former prosperity, and many respectable and virtuous citizens employed their thoughts in devising methods for reviving the decaying industry and commerce of their country. From the violence of the remedies proposed, we may judge how desperate and fatal the malady appeared. Some, confounding a violation of police with criminality against the State, contended that, in order to check illicit commerce, every person convicted of carrying it on should be punished with death and confiscation of all his effects. Others, forgetting the distinction between civil offences and acts of impiety, insisted that counterband trade should be ranked among the crimes reserved for the cognizance of the Inquisition; that such as were guilty of it might be tried and punished, according to the secret and summary form in which that dreadful tribunal exercises its jurisdiction."

No. VIII.

Herrera, vol. iv. p. 298.—"The seventh Inga Yapangue, as soon as his father was dead, paid him very great honours, and a greater number of women and servants was shut up in his tomb, to die there, and serve him in the other world, than any other had before; and he had more treasure, more provisions, and more clothes put in with them, and more men and women hanged themselves in their own hair. * * * This custom of burying women and other persons with the dead was universal among the mountain and Yunga Indians. When Acoya, Lord of the greatest part of the vale of Xauxa, died, a boy ran away to the Spaniards, because they would have shut him up alive in the prince's tomb."

This author says that the Mexicans and those under their dominions computed, that every third child of the poorer sort was taken for sacrifice, and their idols were the better served, as the legs and arms of the victims were a most acceptable feast to the worshippers. To the deity of agriculture, when the reeds of the Indian wheat were small, they sacrificed new born-babes, and others bigger, as it grew up, till it was eared and ripe, and then they sacrificed men.

Speaking of the temple of Mexico, he says, vol. ii. p. 380.—"Either to shew the multitude of sacrifices they offered to their gods, or to keep in their minds the remembrance of death, to which all men are subject, they had a charnel of the sculls of men, taken in war and sacrificed, which was without the temple."—After describing it, he adds: "The number was so great, that Gomora, who had it from Andrew de Tapia and Gonzalvo de Umbria, two persons that took the pains to count them, tells us, they amounted to above one hundred and thirty thousand sculls, beside those that were in the towers, which they could not count," (when we consider that the Mexicans had not been in possession, by their own account, of the country above two centuries, and the temple probably not built for many years after their first arrival, this is a very great number;) "and the said Gomora condemns this practice, in regard that they were the heads of men sacrificed, as being the effect of so cruel a cause as was the killing so many innocent persons; and he is in the right, for had they been the heads of men that had died a natural death, it was commendable to expose them to public view, to put the living in mind of their end.'

The Indians seem to have had great intercourse with the devil, as well became the gloomy cruelty of their worship; and the Spaniards, impressed with horror at the dreadful waste of human life for sacrifices and feasts, which always went together, seem in some degree to have credited the reality of that intercourse. These following passages from Herrera are curious, and will shew how far this was the case:—

"The arms over the gates of the palace, borne in Montezuma's colours and those of his ancestors, were an eagle stooping to a tyger, with the talons ready to lay hold. Some will have it to be a griffon, not an eagle; affirming that there are griffons on the mountains of Taguacan, and that they unpeopled the vale of Auncutlan, devouring the inhabitants. * * * This is not certain, there being nothing to prove it but their bare word; for hitherto the Spaniards never saw any griffon in that country, though the Indians shewed the pictures of some among their antiquities. They were represented to have down, and no feathers, and said to be so strong that they could break the strongest bones of men and deer; their shape between a lion and an eagle, with four legs, a beak, talons, and wings to fly. * * * Pliny and other natural philosophers look upon what is said of the griffon as a fable, though many tales and stories are told of them. Our people, never having seen any, some conclude and affirm, that ever since the beginning of idolatry among the Indians in New Spain, the devil was wont to appear in that shape, as he did in many others that were no less fierce and frightful."

After describing the great riches in gold and jewels, &c. of a private chapel, "where Montezuma was wont to pray many nights, and the devil appeared and spoke to him, giving answers and advice suitable to his petition and request," he proceeds to give an account of his various houses, and thus concludes:—"None of these houses belonging to the King were without chapels or oratories to the devil, whom they worshipped for the sake of what was there, and accordingly they were all large, and had many people belonging to them, which shews how superstitious they were, and how many ways the devil endeavoured to be honoured and worshipped."

In an account of the manners of Castila del Oro, or the country about the isthmus of America, there is this passage:—"There was a sort of men among them called masters, in their language, each of these had a very little cottage without a door, and open at the top. The master went into it at night, pretended to talk with the devil, forming several voices, and then told the lord what the devil had discovered and answered to him. In these provinces, there were witches that did harm to children, and even to great people at the instigation of the devil, who gave them ointments made of certain herbs, with which they daubed themselves. He appeared to them in the shape of a beautiful male child, to the end that those simple people might believe him without being frightened. They never saw his hands, or his feet; he had three claws like a griffon, and he attended the witches when they went to do any harm. The Adelantado Pascuas de Andagoya affirmed, he had proof that a witch was one night in a town, with other women, and that at the same time she was seen a league and a half from thence, at a farm. where there were some people belonging to her lord."

In an account of the religion and manners of the Indians in some part of the new kingdom of Grenada, there is this curious passage:—"As to the origin of the human race, the barbarians of this country believe, that a man they called Are, who always lay down, and was not really a man, but a shadow of a man, carved the faces of men and women on pieces of wood, and casting them into the water, they came out alive, and he married them. They went away from him, began to till the ground, and they never saw that Are again; and this, they say, happened on the other side of the great river the Magdalen. Their prayers and devotions were performed on the water, and the devil strangely deluded them, and they talked with him, who persuaded them that it was not good to go to heaven, besides many more absurdities. They accounted the Sun their father and the Moon their mother; and when she was eclipsed they wept, saying, 'Whither are you going, mother?' &c. * * * And then they made noise with their trumpets, pipes,

drums and other instruments; and the devil persuaded them that the heaven with all its light would be turned upside down."

In mentioning the Indians amongst the mountains af Abibe—"Most of the Indians about this mountain were subject to a Cazique, Nutibara, who was carried about on a golden bier, and had heads of his enemies before his house, for they were wont to eat their bodies; they worshipped the Sun; the devil appeared, and spoke to them in several shapes. An Indian woman, who went away with Bovadillo's men, told them, that when captain Cesar returned to Carthagena, the prime men of those vales assembled, and having offered extraordinary sacrifices, the devil appeared to them in the shape of a tyger, and told them that those men come from beyond sea, and would soon return to subdue the country, therefore they should prepare for their defence; and thee he vanished, after which preparations were made accordingly, and all the gold being taken out of the graves, was hid."

In another part of the history, he says,—"In this city of Tlascala, was a spring to which they carried new-born children to be bathed, in the nature of baptism, which they thought delivered them from misfortunes, and there they offered flowers, perfumes, and sacrificed men. They were great conjurers, wizards and diviners; used to cast lots, and believe in dreams and prodigies. They saw strange apparitions of the devil, in the shape of a lion, tyger, or other borrowed body, and he would talk to them, and was known by having no shadow, no small bones in the joints, neither eye-brows nor eye-lids, his eyes round, without balls or white. * * * Their temples were pyramidal, with steps going up to the top, where was one or two little chapels, and before them large columns, with fires and perfumes on them day and night. * * They were exact in the service of their temples, and the greatest sacrifice was of men and dogs, so that there were shambles of dogs sacrificed; but the prime sacrifice of all was that of the first prisoner taken in war. One who had been a priest, and was converted, said, that when they tore out the heart of the wretched person sacrificed, it did beat so strongly, that he took it up from the ground three or four times, till it cooled by degrees, and then he threw the body, still moving down the steps. To know whether the devil consented to what they asked, they offered him something like henbane, an herb reckoned of great virtue for distempers, which they placed on certain vessels on the altar; when the priests came to see those vessels, and found the print of eagle's feet on them, they declared the same to the people, and then they joyfully began the solemnity with trumpets, drums, horns, and other instruments, the multitude celebrating that token given them by the devil."

LADY GRISELD BAILLIE.

Wodrow's History, page 394. chap. 8. book 3.—"Mr. Robert Baillie of Jerviswoode, with whose sufferings I shall end this section, was a gentleman who had testimony of some of the greatest men of this age, whom I could name, for the best of men and greatest of statesmen, and so was a very proper object of the fury of this period, and could scarce escape the rage and malice of the duke of York, and such as were with him, carrying on the plot against our religion, reformation, and liberty.

"Indeed, he fell a sacrifice for our holy reformation, and received the crown of martyrdom on account of his zealous appearances against popery and arbitrary power. I can never consider this great man, and several others, in this and succeeding years, of the most judicious and notable of our martyrs, neglected of design by the collectors of the *cloud of witnesses*, but I blame their private and party spirit.

"Jerviswood's trial was published by the managers, and I may perhaps make some remarks afterwards upon it. I shall here give some few hints I meet with in the records with relation to him when before the council, of which there is nothing in his printed trial.

"Through his long confinement and bad treatment when in prison, this good man turned very sickly and tender; and it was reckoned almost certain by all, that, had the managers spared this gentleman a few weeks longer, they would have been rid of him by a natural death, and escaped the indelible blot of inhumanity and barbarity t[illegible] cellent a person. He was evidently d[illegible]ing man when tried before the Justiciary, [illegible]d was obliged to appear in his nig[illegible] before them, and was scarce able to stand wh[illegible] he spake; and yet he was kept in the pannel for ten hours, and behoved to take cordials several times; and next day he was carried in a chair in his nightgown to the scaffold.

"By the council books, I find, August 18., 'the Lady Jerviswood is, upon her petition, allowed to see her dying husband with the physicians, but to speak nothing to him but what they hear and are witness to.' I am of opinion, this low state of his health put the managers at first off the design of processing him criminally; and to secure his estate, while he is dying a natural death, brought on by their maltreatment, they raise a process, in order to fine him to the value of six thousand pounds.

"Thus, August 30. the Council order the Advocate to pursue Jerviswood for resetting, entertaining and corresponding with rebels; and, as far as I can find, he was not able to appear before the council when they passed a decree against him, only he ordered his advocate to appear for him."

Page 39—(The interrogatories put to Jerviswood on his examination by a committee appointed by the council.)

"1. Did you harbour or intercommune with Mr. Samuel Arnot?" &c. &c. (a long list of names.)

"2. Did you reset Alexander Tweedy, your gardener, after Bothwel-bridge?" (Refusing to answer to these, he was fined in the sum of six thousand pounds.)

"September 10.—The council give orders to remove the Lady Garden, his sister, and the Lady Jerviswood, from his room in prison, they being informed he is recovered of his indisposition. We shall find this was but a very slender recovery, and that afterwards he grew worse, in part no doubt from being deprived of the care of these excellent ladies; and, November 9, the Lady Garden is allowed to be close prisoner with Jerviswood, because of his valetudinary condition.

"He continued in prison, still weaker and weaker, till December 18th, when I find the king's advocate is ordered to pursue a process of treason and forfeiture against Mr. Robert Baillie of Jerviswood, to-morrow at two of the clock; and Sir George Lockart of Carnwath, and Sir John Lauder, advocates, are appointed to concur with the king's advocates in the process. I need not again remark, that this was to prevent Jerviswood's employing them in defence of his just rights. However, the time was exceeding short, and therefore, though it seems to be the more straitning to him, the libel and indictment were not put in his hands till the 22d. Upon the 23d, Jerviswood gives a petition to the council, shewing,—

"'That only yesterday he received an indictment of treason, at eleven of the clock, to appear before the justiciary this day at two of the clock in the afternoon, which is so short a time, that the petitioner has got no lawyer consulted, nor time to raise his letters of exculpation for proving his defences and objections against the witnesses, as is allowed by the Act of Regulation, and the ordinary time in such cases is fifteen days: and the petitioner at present being so sick and weak, that he is not able to come over his bed, without being lifted, as appears by the testimony of his physicians; wherefore he humbly supplicates that the council may prorogate the diet to some competent time, and allow him lawyers, viz. Sir Patrick Hume, Mr. Walter Pringle, Mr. James Graham, Mr. William Fletcher, Mr. James Falconer, and Mr. William Baillie.'—The council refuse to prorogate the diet, 'but grant him the advocates he seeks, and allow them to plead without hazard; they containing themselves in their pleadings in terms of law and loyalty, as they shall answer it at their peril.'

"Jerviswood's advocates pled that he ought not to pass to the knowledge of an assize, because he had not received a citation of fifteen days, &c. &c. That his harbouring, entertaining and intercommuning with the persons named, is *res hactenus judicata*, and the pannel already fined in a vast sum on that account. The advocate then restricted to the pannel's entering into a conspiracy for raising a rebellion, and for procuring money to be sent to the Earl of Argyle, and for concealing this. The Earl of Tarras was brought as a witness against Jerviswood, against whose evidence it was objected, that, being himself under an indictment for high treason, and under the fear of death, his testimony ought not to be admitted. The Lords repelled all objections and called the Earl as a witness. His deposition," says Wodrow, "and that of commissionary Monro, Philiphaugh, and Gallowshiels, have more than once been printed, not only in Jerviswood's process, but in Prat's History of the Ryehouse Plot, and I shall not here enter on the detail of them. They prove that Jerviswood, being in hazard, as all the nation were, of oppression, after the unaccountable decision in Blackwood's case, went up to London, and did speak and talk anent methods to bring in the King, to exclude a popish successor; and that they discoursed likewise upon money to be sent to the Earl of Argyle, and Mr. Martin. In May, 1683, came down to Scotland with some proposals to the Earl of Tarras, Philiphaugh, Gallowshiels, and some others, to engage them to a rising, when England rose for the security of the protestant religion; but as to a design against the king's life, nothing of that was known to any of them. Most part of them relate to the plot (as it was called) and design then in hand, and very little militates against Jerviswood in particular. They all adhere judicially to their depositions made before the Lords of the secret committee.

"Before the assize closed, the advocate had a most bloody and severe speech to them, wherein every thing is stretched to the uttermost against the pannel. I shall not insert it here, since it is already published. In short, he urges the appointment of a thanksgiving, for the discovery of a conspiracy through the nations, the practice of the judges in England, who found proof enough to forfeit some of all ranks, and insists upon the witnesses being Jerviswood's relations; and if he be not punished, no man can; the conspiracy is a cheat, the King's judges murderers, and the witnesses knaves; and such as have died martyrs. * * * I wish I could give as good an account of the moving speech Mr. Baillie had to the inquest, and the home thrusts he gave the advocate; but I can only say, he appealed to the advocate's conscience, whether he was not satisfied as to his innocence, and had not owned so much to himself; which the other acknowledged, but added he acted now by order from the government; and to the advocate and judges, he, like a dying man, most pathetically disclaimed any access to, or knowledge of, any design against the King or his brother's life; but added, if his life must go for his essays to prevent a popish succes-

sion, he owned them, and heartily parted with his life as a testimony against a papist's mounting the throne. * * * * Thus this saint of God is hasted away to his father's house. In two days' time they begin and end his process, and executed him as if they had been in fear of being prevented by a natural death. His carriage was most sedate, courageous, and Christian, after his sentence and during the hours he had to live: and at his execution he was in the greatest serenity of soul possible almost for a person on this side of heaven, though extremely low in body. He prepared a speech to have delivered on the scaffold, but was hindered. Under the prospect of this, he left copies with his friends, and it deserves a room here, as containing a short and distinct view of his case." (See the last speech of Mr. Robert Baillie of Jerviswood, who died at the cross of Edinburgh, Dec. 24, 1684, in Woodrow's Hist. book iii. chap. 8.)

"I have several circumstances of this excellent person's carriage during the trial and execution too large to be inserted here. When his sentence was intimated, he said, 'My Lords, the time is short, the sentence is sharp, but I thank my God, who hath made me as fit to die as ye are to live.' When sent back to his room in the prison, after the sentence, he leaned over on the bed, and fell into a wonderful rapture of joy, from the assurance he had, that in a few hours he should be inconceivably happy. Being, after a little silence, asked how he was, he answered 'Never better, and in a few hours I'll be well beyond all conception; they are going to send me in pieces and quarters through the country; they may hag and hew my body as they please, but I know assuredly nothing shall be lost, but all these, my members, shall be wonderfully gathered, and made like Christ's glorious body.' When at the scaffold, he was not able to go up the ladder without support. When on it, he said 'My faint zeal for the Protestant religion has brought me to this end:' and the drums interrupted him."

Wodrow's additions and amendments to vol. i. and ii.—"After the case of that singular person, Baillie of Jerviswood, was printed off, I received a narrative of some further circumstances of his trial, from a worthy friend of mine, who was present, and a mournful spectator. What passed made so deep an impression, that he is distinct as to the very words and phrases that were used; and I thought they deserved a room here.

"'Jerviswood, being much indisposed, came to the bar of the justiciary in his nightgown, attended by his sister, who several times gave him cordials, he being so ill that he was obliged to sit down on a stool. He heard all very patiently, only when ——— was reading his long narrative, Jerviswood would now and then look upwards, and hold up his hands. When the declarations and affidavits that came from England were read, he appeared to be in some concern, and said, 'Oh, oh!' staring upon the king's advocate."

"But when the advocate, in his discourse to the assize, insisted on those declarations, and affidavits, and enlarged more fully upon them in the speech he caused print in Jerviswood's trial, then Jerviswood stared at him very broad, and appeared to be very much troubled.

"After the advocate had ended his discourse, Jerviswood desired liberty of the Earl of Linlithgow to speak a few words, not being able to say much, because of his great weakness; which being granted, he spoke to this purpose: 'That the sickness now upon him, in all human appearance, would soon prove mortal, and he could not live many days; but he found he was intended as a public sacrifice in his life and estate; that he would say nothing as to the justice of their Lordship's interlocutor, and was sorry his trial had given them so much and so long trouble, by staying so long in the Court, it being then past midnight. And then addressed himself to the assize, telling them he doubted not but they would act as men of honour, that there were hard things in the depositions of the witnesses against him, which was to be their rule, and that nothing he could say was to prevail with them; yet, for the exoneration of his own conscience, and that his poor memory and family might not suffer unjustly, he behoved to say, that the most material witnesses were correspondents, (viz. convicted of connection with the conspirators,) and life might be precious to some of them. But there is one thing,' says he, 'which vexes me extremely, and wherein I am injured to the utmost degree, and that is, for a plot to cut off the King and His Royal Highness, and that I sat up nights to form a declaration to palliate or justify such a villany. I am in probability to appear, in some hours, before the tribunal of the Great Judge, and in presence of your lordships and all here, I solemnly declare that never was I prompted or privy to any such thing, and that I abhor and detest all thoughts or principles for touching the life of His Sacred Majesty or his royal brother. I was ever for monarchical government.' And then looking directly upon the king's advocate, he said, 'My Lord, I think it very strange that you charge me with such abominable things: you may remember, that when you came to me in prison, you told me such were laid to my charge, but you did not believe them. How then, my Lord, come you to lay such a stain upon me with so much violence? Are you now convinced in your conscience that I am more guilty than before? You may remember what past betwixt us in prison.' The whole audience fixed their eyes upon the advocate, who appeared in no small confusion, and said, 'Jerviswood, I own what you say, my thoughts there was as a private man, but what I say

here is by special direction of the privy council; and' pointing to Sir William Patterson Clerk, added, 'he knows my orders.'—'Well,' said Jerviswood, 'if your lordship have one conscience for yourself and another for the council, I pray God forgive you! I do.' And turning to the justice-general, he said, 'My lord, I trouble your lordships no further.'

Hume's Hist. of England, chap. 69.—"The court was aware that the malcontents of England, held a correspondence with those of Scotland: and that Baillie of Jerviswood, a man of merit and learning, with two gentlemen of the name of Campbell, had come to London, under pretence of negociating the settlement of the Scottish Presbyterians in Carolina, but really with a view of concerting measures with the English conspirators. Baillie was sent prisoner to Edinburgh; but as no evidence appeared against him, the council required him to swear, that he would answer all questions that should be propounded to him. He refused to submit to so iniquitous a condition, and a fine of six thousand pounds was imposed upon him. At length two persons, Spence and Carstairs, being put to the torture, gave evidence which involved the Earl of Tarras and some others, who, in order to save themselves, were induced to accuse Baillie. He was brought to trial; and being in so languishing a condition from the treatment which he had met with in prison, that it was feared he would not survive that night, he was ordered to be executed the very afternoon on which he received sentence."

The husband of lady Griseld inherited the virtue and firmness of his father. "In the year 1715, though then in the treasury, which might have made him silent in giving an opinion against the measures of the court, he publicly declared himself for mercy to the poor unhappy sufferers by the rebellion, and amongst many arguments for it in a long speech he made in parliament, which he began by saying, he had been bred in the school of affliction, which had instructed him in both the reasonableness and necessity of showing mercy to others in like circumstances, concluded by entreating them to take the advice which the Prophet Elisha gave to the King of Israel, in the 2d book of Kings, 6th chap. 22d and 23d verses. 'And he answered, thou shalt not smite them: would'st thou smite those whom thou hast taken captive with thy sword and with thy bow? Set bread and water before them, that they may eat and drink, and go to their master. And he prepared great provision for them; and when they had eaten and drank, he sent them away, and they went to their master. So the bands of Syria came no more into the land of Israel.'"
—*Lady M.'s Nar.*

FUGITIVE PIECES.

FUGITIVE PIECES.

LORD JOHN OF THE EAST.

The fire blazed bright till deep midnight,
And the guests sat in the hall,
And the Lord of the feast, Lord John of the East,
Was the merriest of them all.

His dark-grey eye, that wont so sly
Beneath his helm to scowl,
Flash'd keenly bright, like a new-wak'd sprite,
As pass'd the circling bowl.

In laughter light, or jocund lay,
That voice was heard, whose sound,
Stern, loud, and deep, in battle-fray
Did foe-men fierce astound;

And stretch'd so balm, like lady's palm,
To every jester near,
That hand which thro' a prostrate foe
Oft thrust the ruthless spear.

The gallants sang, and the goblets rang,
And they revel'd in careless state,
Till a thund'ring sound, that shook the ground,
Was heard at the castle gate.

"Who knocks without, so loud and stout?
"Some wand'ring knight, I ween,
"Who from afar, like a guiding star,
"Our blazing hall hath seen.

"If a stranger it be of high degree,
"(No churl durst make such din,)
"Step forth amain, my pages twain,
"And soothly ask him in.

"Tell him our cheer is the forest deer,
"Our bowl is mantling high,
"And the Lord of the feast is John of the East,
"Who welcomes him courteously"

The pages twain return'd again,
And a wild, scared look had they;
"Why look ye so?—is it friend or foe?"
Did the angry Baron say.

"A stately knight without doth wait,
"But further he will not hie,
"Till the Baron himself shall come to the gate,
"And ask him courteously."—

"By my mother's shroud, he is full proud!
"What earthly man is he?"
"I know not, in truth," quoth the trembling youth,
"If earthly man it be.

"In Raveller's plight, he is bedight,
"With a vest of the crim'sy meet;
"But his mantle behind, that streams on the wind,
"Is a corse's bloody sheet."

"Out, paltry child! thy wits are wild,
"Thy comrade will tell me true:
"Say plainly, then, what hast thou seen?
"Or dearly shalt thou rue."

Faint spoke the second page with fear,
And bent him on his knee,
"Were I on your father's sword to swear,
"The same it appear'd to me."

Then dark, dark lower'd the Baron's eye,
And his red cheek changed to wan;
For again at the gate more furiously,
The thund'ring din began.

"And is there ne'er of my vassals here,
"Of high or low degree,
"That will unto this stranger go,—
"Will go for the love of me?"

Then spoke and said, fierce Donald the Red,—
(A fearless man was he,)
"Yes; I will straight to the castle gate,
"Lord John, for the love of thee."

With heart full stout, he hied him out,
Whilst silent all remain:
Nor moved a tongue those gallants among,
Till Donald return'd again.

"O speak," said his Lord, "by thy hopes of grace,
"What stranger must we hail?"
But the haggard look of Donald's face
Made his falt'ring words to fail.

"It is a knight in some foreign guise,
"His like did I never behold;
"For the stony look of his beamless eyes
"Made my very life-blood cold.

"I did him greet in fashion meet,
"And bade him your feast partake,
"But the voice that spoke, when he silence broke,
"Made the earth beneath me quake.

"O such a tone did tongue ne'er own
"That dwelt in mortal head;—
"It is like a sound from the hollow ground,—
"Like the voice of the coffin'd dead.

"I bade him to your social board,
"But in he will not hie,
"Until at the gate this castle's Lord
"Shall entreat him courteously

"And he stretch'd him the while with a ghastly smile,
"And sternly bade me say,
"'Twas no deputy's task your guest to ask
"To the feast of the woody bay."

Pale grew the Baron, and faintly said,
As he heaved his breath with pain,
"From such a feast as there was spread,
"Do any return again?

"I bade my guest to a bloody feast,
"Where the death's wound was his fare,
"And the isle's bright maid, who my love betray'd,
"She tore her raven hair.

"The sea-fowl screams, and the watch-tower gleams,
"And the deaf'ning billows roar,
"Where he unblest was put to rest,
"On a wild and distant shore.

"Do the hollow grave and the whelming wave
"Give up their dead again?
"Doth the surgy waste waft o'er its breast
"The spirits of the slain?"

But his loosen'd limbs shook fast, and pour'd
The big drops from his brow,
As louder still the third time roar'd
The thund'ring gate below.

"O rouse thee, Baron, for manhood's worth!
"Let good or ill befall,
"Thou must to the stranger knight go forth,
"And ask him to your hall."

"Rouse thy bold breast," said each eager guest,
"What boots it shrinking so?
"Be it fiend or sprite, or murder'd knight,
"In God's name thou must go.

"Why should'st thou fear? dost thou not wear
"A gift from the great Glendower,
"Sandals blest by a holy priest,
"O'er which nought ill hath power."

All ghastly pale did the Baron quail,
As he turn'd him to the door,
And his sandals blest, by a holy priest,
Sound feebly on the floor.

Then back to the hall and his merry mates all
He cast his parting eye.
"God send thee amain, safe back again!"
He heav'd a heavy sigh.

Then listen'd they, on the lengthen'd way,
To his faint and less'ning tread,
And, when that was past, to the wailing blast
That wail'd as for the dead.

But wilder it grew, and stronger it blew,
And it rose with an elrich sound,
Till the lofty keep on its rocky steep,
Fell hurling to the ground.

Each fearful eye then glanced on high,
To the lofty-window'd wall,
When a fiery trace of the Baron's face
Thro' the casements shone on all.

But the vision'd glare pass'd thro' the air,
And the raging tempest ceast,
And never more, on sea or shore,
Was seen Lord John of the East.

The sandals, blest by a holy priest,
Lay unscath'd on the swarded green,
But never again, on land or main,
Lord John of the East was seen.

MALCOM'S HEIR.

O go not by Duntorloch's Walls
When the moon is in the wane,
And cross not o'er Duntorloch's Bridge,
The farther bank to gain.

For there the Lady of the Stream
In dripping robes you'll spy,
A-singing to her pale wan babe,
An elrich lullaby.

And stop not at the house of Merne,
On the eve of good Saint John,
For then the Swath'd Knight walks his rounds
With many a heavy moan.

All swath'd is he in coffin weeds,
And a wound is in his breast,
And he points still to the gloomy vault,
Where they say his corse doth rest.

But pass not near Glencromar's Tower,
Tho' the sun shine e'er so bright;
More dreaded is that in the noon of day,
Than these in the noon of night.

The night-shade rank grows in the court,
And snakes coil in the wall,
And bats lodge in the rifted spire,
And owls in the murky hall.

On it there shines no cheerful light,
But the deep-red setting sun
Gleams bloody red on its battlements,
When day's fair course is run.

And fearfully in night's pale beams,
When the moon peers o'er the wood,
Its shadow grim stretch'd o'er the ground
Lies blackening many a rood.

No sweet bird's chirping there is heard,
No herd-boy's horn doth blow;
But the owlet hoots, and the pent blast sobs,
And loud croaks the carrion-crow.

No marvel! for within its walls
Was done the deed unblest,
And in its noisome vaults the bones
Of a father's murderer rest.

He laid his father in the tomb
With deep and solemn woe,
As rumour tells, but righteous Heaven
Would not be mocked so.

There rest his bones in the mouldering earth,
By lord and by carle forgot;
But the foul, fell spirit that in them dwelt,
Rest hath it none, I wot!

"Another night," quoth Malcom's heir,
As he turn'd him fiercely round,
And closely clench'd his ireful hand,
And stamp'd upon the ground:

"Another night within your walls
"I will not lay my head,
"Tho' the clouds of heaven my roof should be,
"And the cold dank earth my bed."

"Your younger son has now your love,
"And my stepdame false your ear;
"And his are your hawks, and his are your hounds,
"And his your dark-brown deer.

"To him you have given your noble steed,
"As fleet as the passing wind;
"But me have you shamed before my friends,
"Like the son of a base-born hind."

Then answer'd him the white-hair'd chief,
Dim was his tearful eye,
"Proud son, thy anger is all too keen,
"Thy spirit is all too high.

"Yet rest this night beneath my roof,
"The wind blows cold and shrill,
"With to-morrow's dawn, if it so must be,
"E'en follow thy wayward will."

But nothing moved was Malcom's heir,
And never a word did he say,
But cursed his father in his heart,
And sternly strode away.

And his coal-black steed he mounted straight,
As twilight gather'd round,
And at his feet with eager speed
Ran Swain, his faithful hound.

Loud rose the blast, yet ne'ertheless
With furious speed rode he,
Till night, like the gloom of a cavern'd mine,
Had closed o'er tower and tree.

Loud rose the blast, thick fell the rain,
Keen flash'd the light'ning red,
And loud the awful thunder roar'd
O'er his unshelter'd head.

At length full close before him shot
A flash of sheeted light,
And the high-arch'd gate of Glencroman's tower,
Glared on his dazzled sight.

His steed stood still, nor step would move,
Up look'd his wistful Swain,
And wagg'd his tail, and feebly whined;
He lighted down amain.

Thro' porch and court he pass'd, and still
His list'ning ear he bow'd,
Till beneath the hoofs of his trampling steed
The paved hall echoed loud.

And other echoes answer gave
From arches far and grand;
Close to his horse and his faithful dog
He took his fearful stand.

The night-birds shriek'd from the creviced roof
And the fitful blast sung shrill;
But ere the mid-watch of the night,
Were all things hush'd and still.

But in the mid-watch of the night,
When hush'd was every sound,
Faint, doleful music struck his ear,
As if waked from the hollow ground.

And loud and louder still it grew,
And upward still it wore,
Till it seem'd at the end of the farthest aisle
To enter the eastern door.

O! never did music of mortal make
Such dismal sounds contain;
A horrid elrich dirge it seem'd,—
A wild unearthly strain.

The yell of pain, and the wail of woe,
And the short shrill shriek of fear,
Thro' the winnowing sound of a furnace flame,
Confusedly struck his ear.

And the serpent's hiss, and the tyger's growl,
And the famish'd vulture's cry,
Were mix'd at times, as with measured skill,
In this horrid harmony.

Up brizzled the locks of Malcom's heir,
And his heart it quickly beat,
And his trembling steed shook under his hand,
And Swain cower'd close to his feet.

When, lo! a faint light thro' the porch
Still strong and stronger grew,
And shed o'er the walls and the lofty roof
Its wan and dismal hue.

And slowly ent'ring then appear'd,
Approaching with soundless tread,
A funeral band in dark array,
As in honour of the dead.

The first that walk'd were torchmen ten,
To lighten their gloomy road,
And each wore the face of an angry fiend,
And on cloven goats' feet trod.

And the next that walk'd as mourners meet,
Were murderers twain and twain,
With bloody hands and surtout red,
Befoul'd with many a stain.

Each with a cut-cord round his neck,
And red-strain'd, starting eyen,
Show'd that upon the gibbet tree
His earthly end had been.

And after these, in solemn state,
There came an open bier,
Borne on black, shapeless, rampant forms,
That did but half appear.

And on that bier a corse was laid,
As corse could never lie,
That did by decent hands composed
In nature's struggles die.

Nor stretch'd, nor swath'd, but every limb
In strong distortion lay,
As in the throes of a violent death
Is fix'd the lifeless clay.

And in its breast was a broken knife,
With the black blood bolter'd round;
And its face was the face of an aged man,
With the filleted locks unbound.

Its features were fixed in horrid strength,
And the glaze of its half-closed eye
A last dread parting look express'd,
Of woe and agony.

But, oh! the horrid form to trace,
That followed it close behind,
In fashion of the chief-mourner,
What words shall minstrel find?

In his lifted hand, with straining grasp,
A broken knife he press'd,
The other half of the cursed blade
Was that in the corse's breast.

And in his blasted, horrid face,
Full strongly mark'd, I ween,
The features of the aged corse
In life's full prime were seen.

Aye; gnash thy teeth and tear thy hair,
And roll thine eye-balls wild,
Thou horrible accursed son,
With a father's blood defiled!

Back from the bier with strong recoil,
Still onward as they go,
Doth he in vain his harrow'd head,
And writhing body throw.

For, closing round, a band of fiends
Full fiercely with him deal,
And force him o'er the bier to bend,
With their fangs of red-hot steel.

Still on they moved, and stopp'd at length,
In the midst of the trembling hall,
When the dismal dirge, from its loudest pitch,
Sunk to a dying fall.

But what of horrour next ensued,
No mortal tongue can tell,
For the thrill'd life paus'd in Malcom's heir,
In a death-like trance he fell.

The morning rose with cheerful light,
On the country far and near,
But neither in country, tower, nor town,
Could they find Sir Malcom's heir.

They sought him east, they sought him west,
O'er hill and vale they ran,
And met him at last on the blasted heath,
A crazed and wretched man.

He will to no one utter his tale,
But the priest of St. Cuthbert's cell,
And aye, when the midnight warning sounds,
He hastens his beads to tell.

NOTE.

The yell of pain, and the wail of woe,
And the short shrill shriek of fear,
Thro' the winnowing sound of a furnace flame.
—P. 559.

In Miss Holford's poem of Margaret of Anjou, there is an assemblage of sounds, preceding a scene of terrific incantation, which is finely imagined, and produces a powerful effect: and this passage in my second ballad may, perhaps, lead the reader to suppose that I have had that description in my mind when I wrote it. Had this been the case, I should have owned it readily. But the Ballad of Malcom's heir was written several years before the publication of the above-mentioned poem, and in the hands of the immediate friends of my own family: though, as no copy of it was ever given away, it was impossible it could ever reach further. I therefore claim it, though acknowledging great inferiority, as a coincidence in thought with that distinguished author.

"Their senses reel'd,—for every sound
Which the ear loves not, fill'd the air;
Each din that reason might confound
Echoed in ceaseless tumult there!
Swift whirling wheels,—the shriek intense
Of one who dies by violence;—
Yells, hoarse and deep, from blood-hounds' throat;
The night-crow's evil-boding note;
Such wild and chattering sounds as throng
Upon the moon-struck ideot's tongue;
The roar of bursting flames, the dash
Of waters wildly swelling round,
Which, unrestrain'd by dyke or mound,
Leap down at once with hideous crash."
Margaret of Anjou. Cant. VII

THE ELDEN TREE.

A FEAST was spread in the Baron's hall,
And loud was the merry sound,
As minstrels played at lady's call,
And the cup went sparkling round.

For gentle dames sat there, I trow,
By men of mickle might,
And many a chief with dark-red brow,
And many a burly knight.

Each had fought in war's grim ranks,
And some on the surgy sea,
And some on Jordan's sacred banks,
For the cause of Christentie.

But who thinks now of blood or strife,
Or Moorish or Paynim foe?
Their eyes beam bright with social life,
And their hearts with kindness glow.

" Gramercie Chieftain, on thy tale!
" It smacks of thy merry mood."—
" Aye, Monks are sly, and women frail,
" Since rock and mountain stood."

" Fye, fye! sir knight, thy tongue is keen,
" 'Tis sharper than thy steel,"—
" So gentle lady, are thine eyen,
" As we poor lovers feel."

" Come, pledge me well, my lady gay,
" Come, pledge me, noble frere;
" Each cheerful mate on such a day,
" Is friend or mistress dear."

And louder still comes jeer and boast,
As the flaggons faster pour,
Till song, and tale, and laugh are lost
In a wildly mingled roar.

Aye, certes, 'tis an hour of glee,
For the Baron himself doth smile,
And nods his head right cheerily,
And quaffs his cup the while.

What recks he now of midnight fear,
Or the night wind's dismal moan?
As it tosses the boughs of that Elden Tree,
Which he thinketh so oft upon?

Long years have past since a deed was done,
By its door only seen,
And there lives not a man beneath the sun,
Who wotteth that deed hath been.

So gay was he, so gay were all,
They mark'd not the growing gloom;
Nor wist they how the dark'ning hall
Lower'd like the close of doom.

Dull grew the goblet's sheen, and grim
The features of every guest,
And colourless banners aloft hung dim,
Like the clouds of the drizzly west.

Hath time pass'd then so swift of pace?
Is this the twilight grey?
A flash of light pass'd thro' the place,
Like the glaring noon of day.

Fierce glanced the momentary blaze
O'er all the gallant train,
And each visage pale, with dazzled gaze,
Was seen and lost again.

And the thunder's rolling peal, from far,
Then on and onward drew,
And varied its sound like the broil of war,
And loud and louder grew.

Still glares the lightning blue and pale,
And roars th' astounding din;
And rattle the windows with bickering hail,
And the rafters ring within.

And cowering hounds the board beneath
Are howling with piteous moan,
While lords and dames sit still as death,
And words are utter'd none.

At length in the waning tempest's fall,
As light from the welkin broke,
A frighten'd man rush'd thro' the hall,
And words to the Baron spoke.

" The thunder hath stricken your tree so fair,
" Its roots on green-sward lie,"—
" What tree?"—" The Elden planted there
" Some thirty years gone by."

" And wherefore starest thou on me so,
" With a face so ghastly wild?"—
" White bones are found in the mould below,
" Like the bones of a stripling child."

Pale he became as the shrouded dead,
And his eye-balls fix'd as stone;
And down on his bosom dropp'd his head,
And he utter'd a stifled groan.

Then from the board, each guest amazed,
Sprang up, and curiously
Upon his sudden misery gazed,
And wonder'd what might be.

Out spoke the ancient seneschal,
" I pray ye stand apart,
" Both gentle dames and nobles all,
" This grief is at his heart.

" Go, call St. Cuthbert's monk with speed,
" And let him be quickly shriven,
" And fetch ye a leech for his body's need,
" To dight him for earth or heaven."

" No, fetch me a priest," the Baron said,
In a voice that seem'd uttered with pain;
And he shudder'd and shrunk, as he faintly bade
His noble guests remain.

"Heaven's eye each secret deed doth scan,
"Heaven's justice all should fear:
"What I confess to the holy man,
"Both Heaven and you shall hear."

And soon St. Cuthbert's monk stood by
With visage sad but sweet,
And cast on the Baron a piteous eye,
And the Baron knelt low at his feet.

"O Father! I have done a deed
"Which God alone did know;
"A brother's blood these hands have shed,
"With many a fiend-like blow:

"For fiends lent strength like a powerful charm,
"And my youthful breast impell'd,
"And I laugh'd to see beneath my arm
"The sickly stripling quell'd.

"A mattock from its pit I took,
"Dug deep for the Elden Tree,
"And I tempted the youth therein to look
"Some curious sight to see.

"The woodmen to their meal were gone,
"And ere they return'd again,
"I had planted that tree with my strength alone,
"O'er the body of the slain.

"Ah! gladly smiled my Father then,
"And seldom he smiled on me,
"When he heard that my skill, like the skill of men,
"Had planted the Elden Tree.

"But where was his eldest son so dear,
"Who nearest his heart had been?
"They sought him far, they sought him near,
"But the boy no more was seen.

"And thus his life and lands he lost,
"And his Father's love beside:
"The thought that ever rankled most
"In this heart of secret pride.

"Ah! could the partial parent wot
"The cruel pang he gives,
"To the child neglected and forgot,
"Who under his cold eye lives!

"His elder rights did my envy move,
"These lands and their princely hall;
"But it was our Father's partial love,
"I envy'd him most of all.

"Now thirty years have o'er me past,
"And, to the eye of man,
"My lot was with the happy cast,
"My heart it could not scan.

"Oh! I have heard in the dead of night,
"My murther'd brother's groan,
"And shudder'd, as the pale moon-light
"On the mangled body shone.

"My very miners, pent in gloom,
"Whose toil my coffers stored,
"And cursed belike their cheerless doom,
"Were happier than their lord.

"O holy man! my tale is told
"With pain, with tears, with shame;
"May penance hard, may alms of gold,
"Some ghostly favour claim?

"The knotted scourge shall drink my blood,
"The earth my bed shall be,
"And bitter tears my daily food,
"To earn Heaven's grace for me."

Now, where that rueful deed was done,
Endow'd with rights and lands,
Its sharp spires bright'ning in the sun,
A stately Abbey stands.

And the meekest monk, whose life is there
Still spent on bended knee,
Is he who built that Abbey fair,
And planted the Elden Tree.

THE GHOST OF FADON.

On Gask's deserted ancient hall
Was twilight closing fast,
And, in its dismal shadows, all
Seem'd lofty, void, and vast.

All sounds of life, now reft and bare,
From its walls had pass'd away,
But the stir of small birds shelter'd there,
Dull owl, or clatt'ring jay.

Loop-hole and window, dimly seen,
With faint light passing through,
Grew dimmer still, and the dreary scene
Was fading from the view:

When the trampling sound of banded men
Came from the court without;
Words of debate and call, and then
A loud and angry shout.

But mingled echoes from within
A mimick mock'ry made,
And the bursting door, with furious din,
On jarring hinges bray'd.

An eager band, press'd rear on van,
Rush'd in with clam'rous sound,
And their chief, the goodliest, bravest man
That e'er trode Scottish ground.

Then spoke forthwith that leader bold,
"We war with wayward fate:
"These walls are bare, the hearth is cold,
"And all is desolate.

"With fast unbroke and thirst unslaked,
"Must we on the hard ground sleep?
"Or, like ghosts from vaulted charnel waked
"Our cheerless vigil keep?"

"Hard hap this day in bloody field,
"Ye bravely have sustain'd,
"And for your pains this dismal bield,
"And empty board have gain'd.

"Hie, Malcom, to that varlet's steed,
"And search if yet remain
"Some homely store, but good at need,
"Spent nature to sustain.

"Cheer up, my friends! still, heart in hand,
"Tho' few and spent we be,
"We are the pith of our native land,
"And we shall still be free.

"Cheer up! tho' scant and coarse our meal,
"In this our sad retreat,
"We'll fill our horn to Scotland's weal,
"And that will make it sweet."

Then all, full cheerly, as they could,
Their willing service lent,
Some broke the boughs, some heap'd the wood,
Some struck the sparkling flint.

And a fire they kindled speedily,
Where the hall's last fire had been,
And pavement, walls, and rafters high,
In the rising blaze were seen.

Red gleam on each tall buttress pour'd
The lengthen'd hall along,
And tall and black behind them lower'd
Their shadows deep and strong.

The ceiling, ribb'd with massy oak,
From bick'ring flames below,
As light and shadow o'er it broke,
Seem'd wav'ring to and fro.

Their scanty meal was on the ground,
Spread by the friendly light,
And they made the brown-horn circle round,
As cheerly as they might.

Some talk of horses, weapons, mail,
Some of their late defeat,
By treach'ry caused, and many a tale
Of Southron spy's retreat.

"Aye, well," says one, "my sinking heart
"Did some disaster bode,
"When faithless Fadon's wily art
"Beguiled us from the road."

"But well repaid by Providence
"Are such false deeds we see;
"He's had his rightful recompense,
"And cursed let him be."

"Oh! curse him not! I needs must rue
"That stroke so rashly given:
"If he to us were false or true,
"Is known to righteous Heaven."

So spoke their chief, then silent all
Remain'd in sombre mood,
Till they heard a bugle's larum call
Sound distant thro' the wood.

"Rouse ye, my friends!" the chieftain said,
"That blast, from friend or foe,
"Comes from the west; thro' forest shade
"With wary caution go.

"And bring me tidings. Speed ye well!"
Forth three bold warriors past.
Then from the east with fuller swell
Was heard the bugle blast.

Out past three warriors more; then shrill,
The horn blew from the north,
And other eager warriors still,
As banded scouts, went forth.

Till from their chief each war-mate good
Had to the forest gone,
And he, who fear'd not flesh and blood,
Stood by the fire alone.

He stood, wrapp'd in a musing dream,
Nor rais'd his drooping head,
Till a sudden, alter'd, paly gleam
On all around was spread.

Such dull, diminish'd, sombre sheen
From moon eclips'd, by swain
Belated, or lone herd is seen
O'er-mantling hill and plain.

Then to the fitful fire he turn'd,
Which higher and brighter grew,
Till the flame like a baleful meteor burn'd
Of clear sulphureous blue.

Then wist the chief, some soul unblest,
Of spirit of power was near;
And his eyes adown the hall he cast,
Yet nought did there appear.

But he felt a strange unearthly breath
Upon the chill air borne,
And he heard at the gate, like a blast of wrath,
The sound of Fadon's horn.

Owls, bats, and swallows, flutt'ring, out
From hole and crevice flew,
Circling the lofty roof about,
As loud and long it blew.

His noble hound sprang from his lair,
The midnight rouse to greet,
Then, like a timid trembling hare,
Couch'd at his master's feet.

Between his legs his drooping tail,
Like dog of vulgar race,
He hid, and with strange piteous wail
Look'd in his master's face.

The porch seem'd void, but vapour dim
Soon fill'd the lowering room,
Then was he aware of a figure grim,
Approaching thro' the gloom.

And striding as it onward came,
The vapour wore away,
Till it stood distinctly by the flame,
Like a form in the noon of day.

Well Wallace knew that form, that head,
That throat unbraced and bare,
Mark'd deep with streaming circlet red,
And he utter'd a rapid prayer.

But when the spectre rais'd its arm,
And brandish'd its glitt'ring blade,
That moment broke fear's chilly charm
On noble Wallace laid.

The threaten'd combat was to him
Relief; with weapon bare,
He rush'd upon the warrior grim,
But his sword shore empty air.

Then the spectre smiled with a ghastly grin,
And its warrior-semblance fled,
And its features grew stony, fix'd, and thin,
Like the face of the stiffen'd dead.

The head a further moment crown'd
The body's stately wreck,
Shook hideously, and to the ground
Dropt from the bolter'd neck.

Back shrunk the noble chief aghast,
And longer tarried not,
But quickly to the portal past,
To shun the horrid spot.

But in the portal, stiff and tall,
The apparition stood,
And Wallace turn'd and cross'd the hall,
Where entrance to the wood.

By other door he hoped to snatch,
Whose pent arch darkly lower'd,
But there, like sentry on his watch,
The dreadful phantom tower'd.

Then up the ruin'd stairs so steep,
He ran with panting breath,
And from a window—desp'rate leap!
Sprang to the court beneath.

O'er wall and ditch he quickly got,
Thro' brake and bushy stream,
When suddenly thro' darkness shot
A ragged and lurid gleam.

He look'd behind, and that lurid light
Forth from the castle came;
Within its circuit thro' the night
Appear'd an elrich flame.

Red glow'd each window, slit, and door,
Like mouths of furnace hot,
And tint of deepest blackness wore
The walls and steepy moat.

But soon it rose with bright'ning power,
Till bush and ivy green,
And wall-flower, fringing breach and tower,
Distinctly might be seen.

Then a spreading blaze with eddying sweep,
Its spiral surges rear'd,
And then aloft on the stately keep,
Fadon's Ghost appear'd.

A burning rafter, blazing bright,
It wielded in its hand;
And its warrior-form, of human height,
Dilated grew, and grand.

Coped by a curling tawny cloud,
With tints sulphureous blent,
It rose with burst of thunder loud,
And up the welkin went.

High, high it rose with wid'ning glare,
Sent far o'er land and main,
And shut into the lofty air,
And all was dark again.

A spell of horror lapt him round,
Chill'd, motionless, amazed,
His very pulse of life was bound
As on black night he gazed.

Till harness'd warriors' heavy tread,
From echoing dell arose;
"Thank God!" with utter'd voice, he said,
"For here come living foes."

With kindling soul that brand he drew
Which boldest Southron fears,
But soon the friendly call he knew,
Of his gallant brave compeers.

With haste each wond'rous tale was told,
How still, in vain pursuit,
They follow'd the horn thro' wood and wold,
And Wallace alone was mute.

Day rose; but silent, sad, and pale,
Stood the bravest of Scottish race;
And each warrior's heart began to quail,
When he look'd in his leader's face.

NOTE.

Blind Harry, after relating how Wallace and his men having taken shelter in the old hall of Gask, and made a meal of what provisions they had with them, were alarmed with the sound of a horn, which caused the chief to send out into the wood two of his followers at a time, repeatedly, till he was left alone, continues thus:—

When that alone Wallace was leaved t
The awful blast abounded meikle mare;

Then trowed he well they [the enemy] had
his lodging seen;
His sword he drew of noble metal keen,
Syne forth he went whereat he heard the
horn;
Without the door, Fawdon was him beforn
As to his sight, his own head in his hand.
A cross he made, when he saw him so stand:
At Wallace with the head he swakked there,
And he in haste soon hint it by the hair,
Syne out again at him he could it cast,
Into his heart he greatly was aghast,
Right well he trowed it was no sprit of man,
It was some devil that sick malice began,
He wist not wale there longer for to bide,
Up thro' the hall thus Wight Wallace can
glide
To a close stair, the boards he rave in twin,
Fifteen foot large he lap out of that inn.
Up the water he suddenly could fare,
Again he blink'd what pearance he saw there,
He thought he saw Fawdon, that ugly Syre
That hail hall he had set into a fire;
A great rafter he had into his hand.
Wallace as then no longer could he stand."

A NOVEMBER NIGHT'S TRAVELLER.

He, who with journey well begun,
Beneath the beam of morning's sun,
Stretching his view o'er hill and dale,
And distant city, (thro' its veil
Of smoke, dark spires and chimnies shewing,)
O'er harvest-lands with plenty flowing,
What time the rous'd and busy, meeting
On King's highway, exchange their greet-
ing,—
Feels his cheer'd heart with pleasure beat,
As on his way he holds. And great
Delight hath he, who travels late,
What time the moon doth hold her state
In the clear sky, while down and dale
Repose in light so pure and pale!—
While lake and pool and stream are seen
Weaving their maze of silv'ry sheen,—
While cot and mansion, rock and glade,
And tower and street, in light and shade
Strongly contrasted, are, I trow!
Grander than aught of noon-day show,
Soothing the pensive mind.

And yet,
When moon is dark, and sun is set,
Not reft of pleasure is the wight,
Who, in snug chaise, at close of night
Begins his journey in the dark,
With crack of whip and ban-dog's bark,
And jarring wheels, and children bawling,
And voice of surly ostler, calling
To post-boy, thro' the mingled din,
Some message to a neighb'ring inn,
Which sound confus'dly in his ear;
The lonely way's commencing cheer.

With dull November's starless sky
O'er head, his fancy soars not high.
The carriage lamps a white light throw
Along the road, and strangely shew
Familiar things which cheat the eyes,
Like friends in motley masker's guise.
"What's that? or dame or mantled maid,
Or herdboy gather'd in his plaid,
Which leans against yon wall his back?
No; 'tis in sooth a tiny stack
Of turf or peat, or rooty wood,
For cottage fire the winter's food.—"
"Ha! yonder shady nook discovers
A gentle pair of rustic lovers.
Out on't! a pair of harmless calves,
Thro' straggling bushes seen by halves.—"
"What thing of strange unshapely height
Approaches slowly on the light,
That like a hunch-back'd giant seems,
And now is whit'ning in its beams?
'Tis but a hind, whose burly back
Is bearing home a loaded sack.—"
"What's that, like spots of flecker'd snow,
Which on the road's wide margin show?
'Tis linen left to bleach by night."
"Gra'mercy on us! see I right?
Some witch is casting cantraips there;
The linen hovers in the air!—
Pooh! soon or late all wonders cease,
We have but scared a flock of geese.—"
Thus oft thro' life we do misdeem
Of things that are not what they seem.
Ah! could we there with as slight skathe
Divest us of our cheated faith!
And then belike, when chiming bells
The near approach of waggon tells,
His wistful looks to see it come,
Its bulk emerging from the gloom,
With dun tarpawling o'er it thrown,
Like a huge mammoth, moving on.
But yet more pleas'd, thro' murky air
He spies the distant bonfire's glare;
And, nearer to the spot advancing,
Black imps and goblins round it dancing;
And, nearer still, distinctly traces
The featur'd disks of happy faces,
Grinning and roaring in their glory,
Like Bacchants wild of ancient story,
And making murgeons to the flame,
As *it* were play-mate of their game.
Full well, I trow, could modern stage
Such acting for the nonce engage,
A crowded audience every night
Would press to see the jovial sight;
And this, from cost and squeezing free,
November's nightly trav'llers see.

Thro' village, lane, or hamlet going,
The light from cottage window shewing
Its inmates at their evening fare,
By rousing fire, and earthenware—
And pewter trenchers on the shelf,—
Harmless display of worldly pelf!—
Is transient vision to the eye
Of hasty trav'ller passing by;
Yet much of pleasing import tells,
And cherish'd in the fancy dwells,
Where simple innocence and mirth
Encircle still the cottage hearth.

Across the road a fiery glare
Doth blacksmith's open forge declare,
Where furnace-blast, and measur'd din
Of hammers twain, and all within,—
The brawny mates their labour plying,
From heated bar the red sparks flying,
And idle neighbours standing by
With open mouth and dazzled eye,
The rough and sooty walls with store
Of chains and horse-shoes studded o'er,—
An armory of sullied sheen,—
All momently are heard and seen.

Nor does he often fail to meet,
In market town's dark narrow street,
(Even when the night on pitchy wings
The sober hour of bed-time brings,)
Amusement. From the alehouse door,
Having full bravely paid his score,
Issues the tipsy artisan,
With tipsier brother of the can,
And oft to wile him homeward tries
With coaxing words, so wond'rous wise!
The dame demure, from visit late,
Her lantern borne before in state
By sloven footboy, paces slow,
With patten'd feet and hooded brow.
Where the seam'd window-board betrays
Interior light, full closely lays
The eves-dropper his curious ear,
Some neighbour's fire-side talk to hear;
While, from an upper casement bending,
A household maid, belike, is sending
From jug or ewer a slopy shower,
That makes him homeward fleetly scour.
From lower rooms few gleams are sent,
From blazing hearth, thro' chink or rent;
But from the loftier chambers peer
(Where damsels doff their gentle geer,
For rest preparing,) tapers bright,
Which give a momentary sight
Of some fair form with visage glowing,
With loosen'd braids and tresses flowing,
Who, busied, by the mirror stands,
With bending head and up-rais'd hands,
Whose moving shadow strangely falls
With size enlarged on roof and walls.
Ah! lovely are the things, I ween,
By arrowy Speed's light glam'rie seen!
Fancy, so touch'd, will long retain
That quickly seen, nor seen again.

But now he spies the flaring door
Of bridled Swan or gilded Boar,
At which the bowing waiter stands
To know th' alighting guest's commands.
A place of bustle, dirt, and din,
Cursing without, scolding within;
Of narrow means and ample boast,
The trav'ller's stated halting post,
Where trunks are missing or derang'd,
And parcels lost and horses chang'd.

Yet this short scene of noisy coil
But serves our trav'ller as a foil,
Enhancing what succeeds, and lending
A charm to pensive quiet, sending
To home and friends, left far behind,
The kindliest musings of his mind;
Or, should they stray to thoughts of pain,
A dimness o'er the haggard train
A mood and hour like this will throw,
As vex'd and burthen'd spirits know.

Night, loneliness, and motion are
Agents of power to distance care;
To distance, not discard; for then,
Withdrawn from busy haunts of men,
Necessity to act suspended,
The present, past, and future blended,
Like figures of a mazy dance,
Weave round the soul a dreamy trance,
Till jolting stone, or turnpike gate
Arouse him from the soothing state.

And when the midnight hour is past,
If thro' the night his journey last,
When still and lonely is the road,
Nor living creature moves abroad,
Then most of all, like fabled wizard,
Night slily dons her cloak and vizard,
His eyes at ev'ry corner greeting,
With some new slight of dext'rous cheating,
And cunningly his sight betrays,
Ev'n with his own lamps' partial rays.

The road, that in fair simple day
Thro' pasture-land or corn-fields lay,
A broken hedge-row's ragged screen
Skirting its weedy margin green,—
With boughs projecting, interlac'd
With thorn and briar, distinctly trac'd
On the deep shadows at their back,
That deeper sink to pitchy black,
Appearing oft to Fancy's eye,
Like woven boughs of tapestrie,—
Seems now to wind thro' tangled wood,
Or forest wild, where Robin Hood,
With all his outlaws, stout and bold,
In olden days his reign might hold,
Where vagrant school-boy fears to roam,
The gypsy's haunt, the woodman's home.
Yea, roofless barn and ruin'd wall,
As passing lights upon them fall,
When favour'd by surrounding gloom,
The castle's ruin'd state assume.

The steamy vapour that proceeds
From moisten'd hide of weary steeds,
And high on either hand doth rise,
Like clouds, storm-drifted, past him flies;
While liquid mire, by their hoof'd feet
Cast up, adds magic to the cheat,
Glancing presumptuously before him,
Like yellow diamonds of Cairngorum.

How many are the subtle ways,
By which sly Night the eye betrays,
When in her wild fantastic mood,
By lone and wakeful trav'ller woo'd!
Shall I proceed? O no! for now
Upon the black horizon's brow
Appears a line of tawny light;
Thy reign is ended, witching Night!

And soon thy place a wizard elph,
(But only second to thyself
In glam'rie's art) will quickly take,
Spreading o'er meadow, vale, and brake,
Her misty shroud of pearly white:—
A modest, tho' deceitful wight,
Who in a softer, gentler way,
Will with the wakeful fancy play,
When knolls of woods, their bases losing,
Are islands on a lake reposing,
And streeted town, of high pretence,
As rolls away the vapour dense,
With all its wavy curling billows,
Is but a row of pollard willows.—
O no! my trav'ller, still and lone,
A far fatiguing way hath gone;
His eyes are dim, he stoops his crest,
And folds his arms, and goes to rest.

SIR MAURICE,

A BALLAD.

Sir Maurice was a wealthy lord,
He liv'd in the north countrie,
Well would he cope with foe-man's sword,
Or the glance of a lady's eye.

Now all his armed vassals wait,
A staunch and burly band,
Before his stately castle's gate,
Bound for the Holy Land.

Above the spearmen's lengthen'd file,
Are figur'd ensigns flying;
Strok'd by their keeper's hand the while,
Are harness'd chargers neighing.

And looks of woe, and looks of cheer,
And looks the two between,
On many a warlike face appear,
Where tears have lately been.

For all they love is left behind;
Hope beckons them before:
Their parting sails spread to the wind,
Blown from their native shore.

Then thro' the crowded portal pass'd
Six goodly knights and tall;
Sir Maurice himself, who came the last,
Was goodliest of them all.

And proudly rov'd with hasty eye
O'er all the warlike train;—
"Save ye, brave comrades! prosp'rously,
Heaven send us o'er the main!

"But see I right? an armed band
From Moorham's lordless hall;
And he who bears the high command,
Its ancient seneschal!

"Return; your stately keep defend;
Defend your lady's bower,
Lest rude and lawless hands should rend
That lone and lovely flower."—

"God will defend our lady dear,
And we will cross the sea,
From slav'ry's chain, his lot severe,
Our noble lord to free."—

"Nay, nay! some wand'ring minstrel's tongue,
Hath fram'd a story vain;
Thy lord, his liegemen brave among,
Near Acre's wall was slain."—

"Nay, good my lord! for had his life
Been lost on battle-ground,
When ceas'd that fell and fatal strife,
His body had been found."—

"No faith to such delusions give;
His mortal term is past."—
"Not so! not so! he is alive,
And will be found at last!"

These latter words right eagerly
From a slender stripling broke,
Who stood the ancient warrior by,
And trembled as he spoke.

Sir Maurice started at the sound,
And all from top to toe
The stripling scann'd, who to the ground
His blushing face bent low.

"Is this thy kinsman, seneschal?
Thine own or thy sister's son?
A gentler page, in tent or hall,
Mine eyes ne'er look'd upon.—

"To thine own home return, fair youth!
To thine own home return;
Give ear to likely, sober truth,
Nor prudent counsel spurn.

"War suits thee not, if boy thou art;
And if a sweeter name
Befit thee, do not lightly part
With maiden's honour'd fame."

He turn'd him from his liegemen all,
Who round their chieftain press'd;
His very shadow on the wall
His troubled mind express'd,

As sometimes slow and sometimes fast
He paced to and fro,
His plumy crest now upward cast
In air, now drooping low.

Sometimes like one in frantic mood,
Short words of sound he utter'd,
And sometimes, stopping short, he stood,
As to himself he mutter'd.

"A daughter's love, a maiden's pride!
And may they not agree?
Could man desire a lov'lier bride,
A truer friend than she?"

"Down, cursed thought! a boy's garb
Betrays not wanton will,

Yet, sharper than an arrow's barb,
That fear might haunt me still."

He mutter'd long, then to the gate,
Return'd and look'd around,
But the seneschal and his stripling mate
Were no where to be found.

With outward cheer, and inward smart,
In warlike fair array,
Did Maurice with his bands depart,
And shoreward bent his way.

Their stately ship rode near the port,
The warriors to receive;
And there, with blessings kind but short,
Did friends of friends take leave.

And soon they saw the crowded strand
Wear dimly from their view;
And soon they saw the distant land,
A line of hazy blue.

The white-sail'd ship with fav'ring breeze,
In all her gallant pride,
Mov'd like the mistress of the seas,
That rippled far and wide.

Sometimes with steady course she went,
O'er wave and surge careering;
Sometimes with sidelong mast she bent,
Her wings the sea-foam sheering.

Sometimes, with poles and rigging bare,
She scudded before the blast;
But safely by the Syrian shore,
Her anchor dropt at last.

What martial honours Maurice won,
Join'd with the brave and great,
From the fierce, faithless Saracen,
I may not here relate.

With boldest band on bridge or moat,
With champion on the plain.
I' th' breach with clust'ring foes he fought,
Chok'd up with grizly slain.

Most valiant by the valiant styl'd,
Their praise his deeds proclaim'd,
And oft his liegemen proudly smil'd
To hear their leader nam'd.

But fate will quell the hero's strength,
And dim the loftiest brow;
And this, our noble chief, at length
Was in the dust laid low.

He lay the heaps of dead beneath,
As sunk life's flick'ring flame,
And thought it was the trace of death,
That o'er his senses came.

And when again day's blessed light
Did on his vision fall,
There stood by his side,—a wond'rous sight
The ancient seneschal.

He strove, but could not utter word,
His misty senses fled;
Again he woke, and Moorham's lord
Was bending o'er his bed.

A third time sank he, as if dead,
And then, his eye-lids raising,
He saw a chief with turban'd head,
Intently on him gazing.

'The prophet's zealous servant I;
His battles I've fought and won;
Christians I scorn, their creeds deny,
But honour Mary's son.

And I have wedded an English dame,
And set her parent free;
And none, who wears an English name,
Shall e'er be thrall'd by me.

For her dear sake I can endure
All wrong, all hatred smother;
Whate'er I feel, thou art secure,
As tho' thou wert my brother."—

And thou hast wedded an English dame!
Sir Maurice said no more,
For o'er his heart soft weakness came,
He sigh'd and wept full sore.

And many a dreary day and night
With the Moslem chief stay'd he,
But ne'er could catch, to bless his sight,
One glimpse of the fair lady.

Oft gazed he on her lattice high
As he paced the court below,
And turn'd his list'ning ear to try
If word or accent low

Might haply reach him there; and oft
Traversed the garden green,
Wotting her footsteps small and soft
Might on the turf be seen.

And oft to Moorham's lord he gave
His list'ning ear, who told,
How he became a wretched slave
Within that Syrian hold;

What time from liegemen parted far,
Upon the battle field,
By stern and adverse fate of war
He was obliged to yield:

And how his daughter did by stealth
So boldly cross the sea
With secret store of gather'd wealth,
To set her father free:

And how into the foeman's hands
She and her people fell;
And how (herself in captive bands)
She sought him in his cell;

And but a captive boy appear'd,
Till grief her sex betray'd,

And the fierce Saracen, so fear'd!
Spoke gently to the maid:

How, for her plighted hand sued he,
And solemn promise gave,
Her noble father should be free
With ev'ry Christian slave;

(For many there, in bondage kept,
Felt the stern rule of vice;)
How, long she ponder'd, sorely wept,
Then paid the fearful price.—

A tale which made his bosom thrill,
His faded eyes to weep;
He, waking, thought upon it still,
And saw it in his sleep.

But harness rings, and the trumpet's bray
Again to battle calls;
And Christian pow'rs, in grand array,
Are near those Moslem walls.

Sir Maurice heard; untoward fate!
Sad to be thought upon:
But the castle's lord unlock'd its gate,
And bade his guest be gone.

"Fight thou for faith by thee ador'd;
By thee so well maintain'd!
But never may this trusty sword
With blood of thine be stain'd!"—

Sir Maurice took him by the hand,
"God bless thee too,"—he cried;
Then to the nearest Christian band
With mingl'd feelings hied.

The battle join'd, with dauntless pride
'Gainst foemen, foemen stood;
And soon the fatal field was dyed
With many a brave man's blood.

At length gave way the Moslem force;
Their valiant chief was slain;
Maurice protected his lifeless corse,
And bore it from the plain.

There's mourning in the Moslem halls,
A dull and dismal sound:
The lady left its 'leaguer'd walls,
And safe protection found.

When months were past, the widow'd dame
Look'd calm and cheerfully;
Then Maurice to her presence came,
And bent him on his knee.

What words of penitence or suit
He utter'd, pass we by;
The lady wept, awhile was mute,
Then gave this firm reply:

"That thou didst doubt my maiden pride
(A thought that rose and vanish'd
So fleetingly) I will not chide;
'Tis from remembrance banish'd.

"But thy fair fame, earn'd by that sword,
Still spotless shall it be:
I was the bride of a Moslem lord,
And will never be bride to thee."

So firm, tho' gentle, was her look,
Hope i' the instant fled;
A solemn, dear farewell he took,
And from her presence sped.

And she a plighted nun became,
God serving day and night;
And he of blest Jerusalem
A brave and zealous knight.

But that their lot was one of woe,
Wot ye, because of this
Their sep'rate single state? if so,
In sooth ye judge amiss.

She tends the helpless stranger's bed,
For alms her wealth is stor'd;
On her meek worth God's grace is shed,
Man's grateful blessings pour'd.

He still in warlike mail doth stalk,
In arms his prowess prove;
And oft of siege or battle talk,
And sometimes of his love.

She was the fairest of the fair,
The gentlest of the kind;
Search ye the wide world every where,
Her like ye shall not find.

She *was* the fairest, *is* the best,
Too good for a monarch's bride;
I would not give her in her nun's coif dress'd
For all her sex beside.

ADDRESS TO A STEAM-VESSEL.

Freighted with passengers of every sort,
A motley throng, thou leav'st the busy port.
Thy long and ample deck, where scatter'd lie
Baskets, and cloaks, and shawls of scarlet dye;
Where dogs and children through the crowd are straying,
And, on his bench apart, the fiddler playing,
While matron dames to tressel'd seats repair,—
Seems, on the gleamy waves, a floating fair.

Its dark form on the sky's pale azure cast,
Towers from this clust'ring group thy pillar'd mast.
The dense smoke issuing from its narrow vent
Is to the air in curly volumes sent,
Which, coiling and uncoiling on the wind,
Trails like a writhing serpent far behind.
Beneath, as each merg'd wheel its motion plies,
On either side the white-churn'd waters rise,
And, newly parted from the noisy fray,
Track with light ridgy foam thy recent way,

Then far diverged, in many a welted line
Of lustre, on the distant surface shine.

Thou hold'st thy course in independent pride;
No leave ask'st thou of either wind or tide.
To whate'er point the breeze, inconstant, veer,
Still doth thy careless helmsman onward steer;
As if the stroke of some magician's wand
Had lent thee power the ocean to command.
What is this power which thus within thee lurks,
And, all unseen, like a mask'd giant works?
Ev'n that which gentle dames, at morning's tea,
From silver urn ascending, daily see
With tressy wreathings playing in the air,
Like the loos'd ringlets of a lady's hair;
Or rising from the enamell'd cup beneath,
With the soft fragrance of an infant's breath:
That which within the peasant's humble cot
Comes from th' uncover'd mouth of sav'ry pot,
As his kind mate prepares his noonday fare,
Which cur, and cat, and rosy urchins share:
That which, all silver'd with the moon's pale beam,
Precedes the mighty Geyser's up-cast stream,
What time, with bellowing din exploded forth,
It decks the midnight of the frozen north,
Whilst travellers from their skin-spread couches rise
To gaze upon the sight with wond'ring eyes.

Thou hast to those "in populous city pent"
Glimpses of wild and beauteous nature lent;
A bright remembrance ne'er to be destroyed,
Which proves to them a treasure, long enjoyed,
And for this scope to beings erst confin'd,
I fain would hail thee with a grateful mind.
They who had nought of verdant freshness seen
But suburb orchards choked with colworts green,
Now, seated at their ease may glide along,
Lochlomond's fair and fairly isles among;
Where bushy promontories fondly peep
At their own beauty in the nether deep,
O'er drooping birch and berried row'n that lave
Their vagrant branches in the glassy wave:
They, who on higher objects scarce have counted
Than church's spire with gilded vane surmounted,
May view, within their near, distinctive ken,
The rocky summits of the lofty Ben;
Or see his purpled shoulders darkly lower
Through the dim drapery of a summer shower.
Where, spread in broad and fair expanse, the Clyde
Mingles his waters with the briny tide,
Along the lesser Cumra's rocky shore,
With moss and crusted lichens flecker'd o'er,
Ev'n he, who hath but warr'd with thieving cat,
Or from his cupboard chaced a hungry rat,
The city cobbler,—scares the wild sea mew
In its mid-flight with loud and shrill halloo;
Or valiantly with fearful threat'ning shakes
His lank and greasy head at Kittywakes,*
The eyes that hath no fairer outline seen
Than chimney'd walls with slated roofs between,
Which hard and harshly edge the smokey sky,
May Aron's softly-vision'd peaks descry,
Coping with graceful state her steepy sides,
O'er which the cloud's broad shadow swiftly glides,
And interlacing slopes that gently merge
Into the pearly mist of ocean's verge.
Eyes which admir'd that work of sordid skill,
The storied structure of a cotton-mill,
May, wond'ring, now behold the unnumber'd host
Of marshall'd pillars on fair Ireland's coast,
Phalanx on phalanx rang'd with sidelong bend,
Or broken ranks that to the main descend,
Like Pharaoh's army, on the Red-sea shore,
Which deep and deeper went to rise no more.

Yet, ne'ertheless, whate'er we owe to thee,
Rover at will on river, lake, and sea,
As profit's bait or pleasure's lure engage,
Thou offspring of that philosophic sage,
Watt, who in heraldry of science ranks
With those to whom men owe high meed of thanks,
And shall not be forgotten, ev'n when Fame
Graves on her annals Davy's splendid name!—
Dearer to fancy, to the eye more fair,
Are the light skiffs, that to the breezy air
Unfurl their swelling sails of snowy hue
Upon the moving lap of ocean blue:
As the proud swan on summer lake displays,
With plumage bright'ning in the morning rays,
Her fair pavilion of erected wings,—
They change, and veer, and turn like living things.

So fairly rigg'd, with shrouding, sails and mast,
To brave with manly skill the winter blast
Of every clime,—in vessels rigg'd like these
Did great Columbus cross the western seas,
And to the stinted thoughts of man reveal'd
What yet the course of ages had conceal'd.
In such as these, on high adventure bent
Round the vast world Magellan's comrades went.
To such as these are hardy seamen found
As with the ties of kindred feeling bound,
Boasting, as cans of cheering grog they sip,
The varied fortunes of "our gallant ship."
The offspring these of old sagacious man
Ere yet the reign of letter'd lore began.

In very truth, compar'd to these thou art
A daily lab'rer, a mechanic swart,

* The common or vulgar name of a water-bird frequenting that coast.

In working weeds array'd of homely grey,
Opposed to gentle nymph or lady gay,
To whose free robes the graceful right is given
To play and dally with the winds of heaven,
Beholding thee, the great of other days
And modern men with all their alter'd ways,
Across my mind with hasty transit gleam,
Like fleeting shadows of a fev'rish dream:
Fitful I gaze with adverse humours teased,
Half sad, half proud, half angry, and half pleased.

TO MRS. SIDDONS.

Gifted of Heaven! who hast, in days gone by,
Moved every heart, delighted every eye,
While age and youth, of high and low degree,
In sympathy were join'd, beholding thee,
As in the drama's ever changing scene
Thou heldst thy splendid state, our tragic queen!
No barriers there thy fair domain confin'd,
Thy sovereign sway was o'er the human mind;
And, in the triumph of that witching hour,
Thy lofty bearing well became thy power.

Th' impassion'd changes of thy beauteous face,
Thy stately form and high imperial grace;
Thine arms impetuous tost, thy robe's wide flow,
And the dark tempest gather'd on thy brow,
What time thy flashing eye and lip of scorn
Down to the dust thy mimic foes have born;
Remorseful musings, sunk to deep dejection,
The fix'd and yearning looks of strong affection;
The action'd turmoil of a bosom rending,
When, pity, love, and honour are contending;—
Who have beheld all this, right well I ween!
A lovely, grand, and wond'rous sight have seen.

Thy varied accents, rapid, fitful, slow,
Loud rage, and fear's snatch'd whisper, quick and low,
The burst of stifled love, the wail of grief,
And tones of high command, full, solemn, brief;
The change of voice and emphasis that threw
Light on obscurity, and brought to view
Distinctions nice, when grave or comic mood,*
Or mingled humours, terse and new, elude
Common perception, as earth's smallest things
To size and form the vesting hoarfrost brings,
Which seem'd as if some secret voice, to clear
The ravell'd meaning, whisper'd in thine ear,
And thou had'st even with him communion kept,
Who hath so long in Stratford's chancel slept,
Whose lines, where Nature's brightest traces shine,
Alone were worthy deem'd of powers like thine;—
They, who have heard all this, have proved full well
Of soul-exciting sound the mightiest spell.

But though time's lengthen'd shadows o'er thee glide,
And pomp of regal state is cast aside,
Think not the glory of thy course is spent;
There's moon-light radiance to thy evening lent,
Which from the mental world can never fade,
Till all who've seen thee in the grave are laid.
Thy graceful form still moves in nightly dreams,
And what thou wert to the wrapt sleeper seems:
While feverish fancy oft doth fondly trace
Within her curtain'd couch thy wonderous face.
Yea; and to many a wight, bereft and lone,
In musing hours, though all to thee unknown,
Soothing his earthly course of good and ill,
With all thy potent charm thou actest still.

And now in crowded room or rich saloon,
Thy stately presence recogniz'd, how soon
The glance of many an eye is on thee cast,
In grateful memory of pleasures past!
Pleas'd to behold thee with becoming grace
Take, as befits thee well, an honour'd place
(Where, blest by many a heart, long may'st thou stand)
Amongst the virtuous matrons of the land.

A VOLUNTEER SONG.

Ye, who Britain's soldiers be,
Freemen, children of the free,
Who freely come at danger's call
From shop and palace, cot and hall,
And brace ye bravely up in warlike geer
For all that ye hold dear!

Blest in your hands be sword and spear!
There is no banded Briton here
On whom some fond mate hath not smil'd,
Or hung in love some lisping child;
Or aged parent, grasping his last stay
With locks of honour'd grey.

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* Those who have been happy enough to hear Mrs. Siddons read, will readily acknowledge, that the discrimination and power with which she gave effect to the comic passages of Shakspeare, were nearly as remarkable and delightful as those which she displayed in passages of a grave or tragic character. It is to be regretted, that only those who have heard her read, are aware of the extent or variety of her genius, which has on the stage been confined almost entirely to tragedy; partly, I believe, from a kind of bigotry on the side of the public, which inclines it to confine poet, painter, or actor to that department of their art in which they have first been acknowledged to excel, and partly from the cast of her features, and the majesty of her figure, being peculiarly suited to tragedy.

Such men behold with steady pride
The threaten'd tempest gath'ring wide,
And list, with onward forms inclin'd,
To sound of foemen on the wind,
And bravely act, 'mid the wild battle's roar,
In scenes untried before.

Let vet'rans boast, as well they may,
Nerves steel'd in many a bloody day;
The gen'rous heart, who takes his stand
Upon his free and native land,
Doth with the first sound of the hostile drum
A fearless man become.

Come then, ye hosts that madly pour
From wave-toss'd floats upon our shore!
If fell or gentle, false or true,
Let those inquire who wish to sue:
Nor fiend nor hero from a foreign strand
Shall lord it in our land.

Come then, ye hosts that madly pour
From wave-toss'd floats upon our shore!
An adverse wind or breezeless main,
Lock'd in their ports our tars detain,
To waste their wistful spirits, vainly keen,
Else here ye had not been.

Yet, ne'ertheless, in strong array,
Prepare ye for a well-fought day.
Let banners wave and trumpets sound,
And closing cohorts darken round,
And the fierce onset raise its mingled roar,
New sound on England's shore!

Freemen, children of the free,
Are brave alike on land or sea; *
And every rood of British ground,
On which a hostile glave is found,
Proves under their firm tread and vig'rous stroke,
A deck of royal oak.

* It was then frequently said, that our seamen excelled our soldiers.

TO A CHILD.

Whose imp art thou, with dimpled cheek,
And curly pate and merry eye,
And arm and shoulders round and sleek,
And soft and fair?—thou urchin sly!

What boots it who, with sweet caresses,
First call'd thee his, or squire or hind?—
For thou in every wight that passes,
Dost now a friendly play-mate find.

Thy downcast glances, grave but cunning,
As fringed eye-lids rise and fall,
Thy shyness, swiftly from me running,—
'Tis infantine coquetry all!

But far afield thou hast not flown,
With mocks and threats half-lisp'd half-spoken,
I feel thee pulling at my gown,
Of right good-will thy simple token.

And thou must laugh and wrestle too,
A mimick warfare with me waging,
To make, as wily lovers do,
Thy after kindness more engaging.

The wilding rose, sweet as thyself,
And new-cropt daises are thy treasure.
I'd gladly part with worldly pelf,
To taste again thy youthful pleasure.

But yet for all thy merry look,
Thy frisks and wiles, the time is coming,
When thou shalt sit in cheerless nook,
The weary spell or horn book thumbing.

Well; let it be! thro' weal and woe,
Thou know'st not now thy future range;
Life is a motley shifting show,
And thou a thing of hope and change.

Erratum. On p. 546, Note xxv, 26 lines from top, for "*with becoming occasions*," read "*with becoming grace on becoming occasions*."